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Shakespeare

GESCHENK
FRESENIUS

P L A I S

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

VOLUME THE TWENTY-SECOND

THE
P L A Y S
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.
VOLUME THE TWENTY-SECOND.

(THE
P L A Y S
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.
VOLUME THE TWENTY-SECOND.

CONTAINING
HAMLET.

B A S I L:

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M. DCCC. II.



H A M L E T.*



VOL. XXII.

B



* HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK.] The original story on which this play is built, may be found in Saxo Grammaticus the Danish historian. From thence Belleforest adopted it in his collection of novels, in seven volumes, which he began in 1564, and continued to publish through succeeding years. From this work, *The Historie of Hamblett*, quarto, bl. l. was translated. I have hitherto met with no earlier edition of the play than one in the year 1604, though it must have been performed before that time, as I have seen a copy of Speght's edition of Chaucer, which formerly belonged to Dr. Gabriel Harvey, (the antagonist of Nash) who, in his own hand-writing, has set down *Hamlet*, as a performance with which he was well acquainted, in the year 1598. His words are these: "The younger sort take much delight in Shakspeare's Venus and Adonis; but his Lucrece, and his tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke, have it in them to please the wiser sort, 1598."

In the books of the Stationers' Company, this play was entered by James Roberts, July 26, 1602, under the title of "A booke called *The Revenge of Hamblett, Prince of Denmarke*, as it was lately acted by the Lord Chamberlain his servantes."

In *Eastward Hoe*, by George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston, 1605, is a fling at the hero of this tragedy. A footman named *Hamlet* enters, and a tankard-bearer asks him—"Sfoote, *Hamlet*, are you mad?"

The frequent allusions of contemporary authors to this play sufficiently show its popularity. Thus, in Decker's *Bel-man's Nightwalkes*, 4to. 1612, we have—"But if any mad *Hamlet*, hearing this, smell villainie, and rush in by violence to see what the tawny diuels [gypies] are dooing, then they excuse the fact" &c. Again, in an old collection of Satirical Poems, called *The Night-Raven*, is this couplet:

"I will not cry *Hamlet Revenge* my greeves,
"But I will call Hangman, Revenge on thieves."

STEEVENS.

Surely no satire was intended in *Eastward Hoe*, which was acted at Shakspeare's own playhouse, (Blackfriars,) by the children of the revels, in 1605. MALONE.

The following particulars relative to the date of this piece, are borrowed from Dr. Farmer's *Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare*, p. 85, 86, second edition:

"Greene, in the Epistle prefixed to his *Arcadia*, bath a lash at some 'vaine glorious tragedians,' and very plainly at Shakspeare in particular. — 'I leave all these to the mercy of their mother-tongue, that feed on nought but the crumbs that fall from the translator's trencher.— That could scarcely latinize their neck verse if they should have neede, yet *English Seneca* read by candlelight

yeelds many good sentences—hee will afford you whole *Hamlets*, I should say, *handfuls* of tragicall speeches.—I cannot determine exactly when this *Epistle* was first published; but, I fancy, it will carry the original *Hamlet* somewhat further back than we have hitherto done; and it may be observed, that the oldest copy now extant, is said to be ‘enlarged to almost as much againe as it was.’ *Gabriel Harvey* printed at the end of the year 1592, ‘*Foure Letters* and certaine Sonnetts, especially touching *Robert Greene*:’ in one of which his *Arcadia* is mentioned. Now *Nash*’s *Epistle* must have been previous to these, as *Gabriel* is quoted in it with applause; and the *Foure Letters* were the beginning of a quarrel. *Nash* replied in ‘*Strange News of the intercepting certaine Letters, and a Convoy of Verses, as they were going privilie to victual the Low Countries, 1593.*’ *Harvey* rejoined the same year in ‘*Pierce’s Supererogation, or a new Praise of the old Affe.*’ And *Nash* again, in ‘*Have with you to Saffron Walden, or Gabriell Harvey’s Hunt is up;*’ containing a full answer to the eldest sonne of the halter-maker, 1596.”—*Nash* died before 1606, as appears from an old comedy called *The Return from Parnassus*. STEEVENS.

A play on the subject of *Hamlet* had been exhibited on the stage before the year 1589, of which Thomas Kyd was, I believe, the author. On that play, and on the bl. letter *Historie of Hamlet*, our poet, I conjecture, constructed the tragedy before us. The earliest edition of the prose-narrative which I have seen, was printed in 1608, but it undoubtedly was a republication.

Shakspeare’s *Hamlet* was written, if my conjecture be well founded, in 1596. See *An Attempt to ascertain the Order of his Plays*, Vol. II. MALONE.

PERSONS represented.

Claudius, *King of Denmark.*

Hamlet, * *son to the former, and nephew to the present, king.*

Polonius, *Lord Chamberlain.*

Horatio, *friend to Hamlet.*

Laertes, *son to Polonius.*

Voltimand, }
Cornelius, } *Courtiers.*
Rosencranz, }
Guildenstern, }

Ofrick, *a courtier.*

Another courtier.

A Priest.

Marcellus, } *Officers.*
Bernardo, }

Francisco, *a soldier.*

Reynaldo, *servant to Polonius.*

A Captain. An Ambassador.

Ghost of Hamlet's father.

Fortinbras, *Prince of Norway.*

Gertrude, *Queen of Denmark, and mother of Hamlet.*

Ophelia, *daughter of Polonius.*

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Players, Grave-diggers, Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.

SCENE, Elfinore.

* *Hamlet*,] i. e. *Amleth*. The *h* transferred from the end to the beginning of the name. STEEVENS.

H A M L E T,

PRINCE OF DENMARK.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

Elfinore. *A Platform before the Castle.*

FRANCISCO *on his post.* Enter to him BERNARDO.

BER. Who's there?

FRAN. Nay, answer me: ² stand, and unfold Yourself.

BER. Long live the king! ³

FRAN. Bernardo?

BER. He.

FRAN. You come most carefully upon your hour.

BER. 'Tis now struck twelve; ⁴ get thee to bed, Francisco.

FRAN. For this relief, much thanks: 'tis bitter cold,

And I am sick at heart.

BER. Have you had quiet guard?

FRAN. Not a mouse stirring.

² — me:] i. e. me who am already on the watch, and have a right to demand the watch-word. STEEVENS.

³ Long live the king!] This sentence appears to have been the watch-word. MALONE.

⁴ 'Tis now struck twelve;] I strongly suspect that the true reading is — new struck &c. So, in *Romeo and Juliet*, A 1. sc. i:

“ But new struck nine.” STEEVENS.

BER. Well, good night.
 If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
 The rivals of my watch,⁴ bid them make haste.

⁴ *The rivals of my watch,*] *Rivals for partners.*

WARBURTON.

So, in Heywood's *Rape of Lucrece*, 1636:

"Tullia. Aruns, associate him.

"Aruns. A rival with my brother," &c.

Again, in *The Tragedy of Hoffman*, 1637:

"And make thee rival in those governments."

Again, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, A& III. sc. v:

"— having made use of him in the wars against Pompey, presently deny'd him rivalry." STEEVENS.

By *rivals* the speaker certainly means *partners* (according to Dr. Warburton's explanation,) or those whom he expected to watch with him. Marcellus had watched with him before; whether as a centinel, a volunteer, or from mere curiosity, we do not learn: but, which ever it was, it seems evident that his station was on the same spot with Bernardo, and that there is no other centinel by them relieved. Possibly Marcellus was an officer, whose business it was to visit each watch, and perhaps to continue with it some time. Horatio, as it appears, watches out of curiosity. But in A& II. sc. i. to Hamlet's question,—"Hold you the watch to night?" Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo, all answer,— "We do, my honour'd lord." The folio indeed, reads—*both*, which one may with greater propriety refer to Marcellus and Bernardo. If we did not find the latter gentleman in such good company, we might have taken him to have been like Francisco whom he relieves, an honest but common soldier. The strange indiscriminate use of Italian and Roman names in this and other plays, makes it obvious that the author was very little conversant in even the rudiments of either language. RITSON.

Rival is constantly used by Shakspeare for a partner or associate. In Bullokar's *English Expofitor*, 8vo. 1616, it is defined, "*One that sueth for the same thing with another;*" and hence Shakspeare, with his usual licence, always uses it in the sense of *one engaged in the same employment or office with another*. *Competitor*, which is explained by Bullokar by the very same words which he has employed in the definition of *rival*, is in like manner (as Mr. M. Mason has observed,) always used by Shakspeare for *associate*. See Vol. IV. p. 221, n. 5.

Mr. Warner would read and point thus:

If you do meet Horatio, and Marcellus

The rival of my watch,—

PRINCE OF DENMARK.

7

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

FRAN. I think, I hear them.—Stand, ho! Who is there?

HOR. Friends to this ground.

MAR. And liegemen to the Dane.

FRAN. Give you good night.

MAR. O, farewell, honest soldier:
Who hath reliev'd you?

FRAN. Bernardo hath my place.
Give you good night. [Exit FRANCISCO.]

MAR. Holla! Bernardo!

BER. Say,
What, is Horatio there?

HOR. A piece of him.⁵

Because Horatio is a gentleman of no profession, and because, as he conceived, there was but one person on each watch. But there is no need of change. Horatio is certainly not an officer, but Hamlet's fellow-student at Wittenberg: but as he accompanied Marcellus and Bernardo on the watch from a motive of curiosity, our poet considers him very properly as an *associate* with them. Horatio himself says to Hamlet in a subsequent scene,

" — This to me

" In dreadful secrecy impart they did,

" And I with them the third night kept the watch."

MALONE.

⁵ Hor. A piece of him.] But why a *piece*? He says this as he gives his hand. Which direction should be marked.

WARBURTON.

A *piece of him*, is, I believe, no more than a cant expression. It is used, however, on a serious occasion in *Pericles*:

" Take in your arms this *piece* of your dead queen."

STEEVENS.

BER. Welcome, Horatio; welcome, good Marcellus.

HOR. What,⁶ has this thing appear'd again to-night?

BER. I have seen nothing.

MAR. Horatio says, 'tis but our fantasy;
And will not let belief take hold of him,
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us:
Therefore I have entreated him along,
With us to watch the minutes of this night;⁷
That, if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes,⁸ and speak to it.

HOR. Tush! tush! 'twill not appear.

BER. Sit down awhile;
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,

⁶ Hor. *What, &c.*] Thus the quarto, 1604. STEEVENS.

These words are in the folio given to Marcellus. MALONE.

⁷ — *the minutes of this night;*] This seems to have been an expression common in Shakspeare's time. I find it in one of Ford's plays, *The Fancies chaste and noble*, A & V:

"I promise ere the minutes of the night." STEEVENS.

⁸ — *approve our eyes,*] Add a new testimony to that of our eyes. JOHNSON.

So, in *King Lear*:

"— this approves her letter,

"That she would soon be here."

See Vol. XVIII. p. 177, n. 7. STEEVENS.

He may approve our eyes,] He may make good the testimony of our eyes; be assured by his own experience of the truth of that which we have related, in consequence of having been eye-witnesses to it. To *approve* in Shakspeare's age, signified to make good, or establish, and is so defined in Cawdrey's *Alphabetical Table of hard English words*, 8vo, 1604, So, in *King Lear*:

"Good king, that must approve the common saw!

"Thou out of heaven's benediction com'st

"To the warm sun." MALONE.

What we two nights have seen.⁹

HOR. Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

BER. Last night of all,
When yon same star, that's westward from the
pole,

Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus, and myself,

The bell then beating one, ——

MAR. Peace, break thee off; look, where it
comes again!

Enter Ghost.

BER. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

MAR. Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.²

BER. Looks it not like the king? mark it, Ho-
ratio.

HOR. Most like:—it harrows me³ with fear, and
wonder.

⁹ *What we two nights have seen.*] This line is by Sir T. Hanmer given to Marcellus, but without necessity. JOHNSON.

² *Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.*] It has always been a vulgar notion that spirits and supernatural beings can only be spoken to with propriety or effect by persons of learning. Thus, Toby in *The Night-walker*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, says:

“ —— It grows still longer,

“ 'Tis steeple-high now; and it sails away, nurse.

“ Let's call the butler up, for *he speaks Latin*,

“ *And that will daunt the devil.*”

In like manner the honest butler in Mr. Addison's *Drummer*, recommends the steward to speak *Latin* to the ghost in that play.

REFD.

³ —— *it harrows me &c.*] To *harrow* is to conquer, to subdue.

BER. It would be spoke to.

MAR. Speak to it, Horatio.

HOR. What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,

Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee,
speak.

MAR. It is offended.

BER. See! it stalks away.

HOR. Stay; speak; speak I charge thee, speak.
[Exit Ghost.]

MAR. 'Tis gone, and will not answer,

BER. How now, Horatio? you tremble, and look pale:

Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you of it?

HOR. Before my God, I might not this believe,
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

MAR. Is it not like the king?

HOR. As thou art to thyself:
Such was the very armour he had on,
When he the ambitious Norway combated;
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,⁴

The word is of Saxon origin. So, in the old bl. l. romance of
Syr Eglamoure of Artoys:

"He swore by him that harowed hell."

Milton has adopted this phrase in his *Comus*:

"Amaz'd I stood, harrow'd with grief and fear!"

STEEVENS.

⁴ — an angry parle,] This is one of the affected words introduced by Lyly. So, in *Two Wise Men and all the Rest Fools*, 1619:

"—— that you told me at our last parle." STEEVENS.

He smote the fledded⁵ Polack on the ice.⁶

'Tis strange.

MAR. Thus, twice before, and jump at this dead hour,⁷

⁵ — *fledded* —] A *sled*, or *sledge*, is a carriage without wheels, made use of in the cold countries. So, in *Tamburlaine*, or the *Scythian Shepherd*, 1590:

“ ————— upon an ivory *sled*

“ Thou shalt be drawn among the frozen poles.”

STEEVENS.

⁶ *He smote the fledded Polack on the ice.*] *Pole-ax* in the common editions. He speaks of a prince of Poland whom he slew in battle. He uses the word *Polack* again, A & II. sc. iv. POPE.

Polack was, in that age, the term for an inhabitant of Poland: *Polaque*, French. As in F. Davison's translation of Passeratius's epigraph on Henry III. of France, published by Camden:

“ Whether thy chance or choice thee hither brings,

“ Stay, passenger, and wail the hap of kings.

“ This little stone a great king's heart doth hold,

“ Who rul'd the fickle French and *Polacks* bold:

“ Whom, with a mighty warlike host attended,

“ With trait'rous knife a cowed monster ended.

“ So frail are even the highest earthly things!

“ Go, passenger, and wail the hap of kings.” JOHNSON.

Again, in *The White Devil*, or *Vittoria Corombona*, &c. 1612:

“ — I scorn him

“ Like a shav'd *Polack* —.” STEEVENS.

All the old copies have *Polax*. Mr. Pope and the subsequent editors read — *Polack*; but the corrupted word shews, I think, that Shakspeare wrote — *Polacks*. MALONE.

With *Polack* for *Polander*, the transcriber, or printer, might have no acquaintance; he therefore substituted *pole-ax* as the only word of like sound that was familiar to his ear. Unluckily, however, it happened that the *singular* of the latter has the same sound as the *plural* of the former. Hence it has been supposed that Shakspeare meant to write *Polacks*. We cannot well suppose that in a *parley* the King belaboured many, at it is not likely that provocation was given by more than one, or that on such an occasion he would have condescended to strike a meaner person than a prince.

STEEVENS.

⁷ — — jump at this dead hour,] So, the 4to. 1604. The folio — *just*. STEEVENS.

The correction was probably made by the author. JOHNSON.

With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

HOR. In what particular thought to work,¹ I
know not;

But, in the gross and scope² of mine opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

MAR. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that
knows,

Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land;
And why such daily cast³ of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights,³ whose fore task
Does not divide the funday from the week:
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day;
Who is't, that can inform me?

HOR. That can I;
At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,

In the folio we sometimes find a familiar word substituted for
one more ancient. MALONE.

Jump and *just* were synonymous in the time of Shakspeare. Ben
Jonson speaks of verses made on *jump names*, i. e. names that suit
exactly. Nash says — “and *jump* imitating a verse in *As in præ-*
senti.” So, in Chapman's *May Day*, 1611:

“Your appointment was *jumps* at three, with me.”

Again, in M. Kyffin's translation of the *Andria* of Terence, 1588:

“Comes he this day so *jump* in the very time of this
marriage?” STEEVENS.

¹ *In what particular thought to work,*] i. e. What particular train
of thinking to follow. STEEVENS.

² — *gross and scope* —] General thoughts, and tendency at
large. JOHNSON.

³ — *daily cast* —] The quartos read — *cost*. STEEVENS.

³ *Why such impress of shipwrights,*] Judge Barrington, *Observa-*
tions on the more ancient Statutes, p. 300, having observed that
Shakspeare gives English manners to every country where his

Whose image even but now appear'd to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,
Dar'd to the combat; in which, our valiant Hamlet
(For so this side of our known world esteem'd him,)
Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd com-
pact,

Well ratified by law, and heraldry,⁴
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands,
Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror:
Against the which, a moiety competent
Was gaged by our king; which had return'd
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same co-mart,
And carriage of the article design'd,⁵

Scene lies, infers from this passage, that in the time even of Queen Elizabeth, shipwrights as well as seamen were forced to serve.

WHALLEY.

Impress signifies only the act of retaining shipwrights by giving them what was called *prest* money (from *prêt*, Fr.) for holding themselves in *readiness* to be employed. See Mr. Douce's note on *King Lear*, Vol. XX. p. 493, n. 4. STEEVENS.

⁴ — by law, and heraldry,] Mr. Upton says, that Shakspeare sometimes expresses one thing by two substantives, and that *law* and *heraldry* means, by the *herald law*. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act IV:

"Where rather I expect victorious life,
"Than death and honour."

i. e. honourable death. STEEVENS.

Puttenham, in his *Art of Poesie*, speaks of the *Figure of Twynnes*, "*horses and barbes*, for *barbed horses*, *venim & dartes*, for *venimous dartes*" &c. FARMER.

— law, and heraldry,] That is, according to the forms of *law heraldry*. When the right of property was to be determined by combat, the rules of *heraldry* were to be attended to, as well as those of *law*. M. MASON.

i. e. to be well ratified by the rules of law, and the forms prescribed *jure speciali*; such as proclamation, &c. MALONE.

⁵ — as, by the same co-mart,

And carriage of the article design'd,] *Comart* signifies a bargain,

His fell to Hamlet: Now, fir, young Fortinbras,
 Of unimproved mettle hot and full,⁶
 Hath in the skirts of Norway, here and there,
 Shark'd up a list of landless resolute,⁷
 For food and diet, to some enterprize
 That hath a stomach in't:⁸ which is no other
 (As it doth well appear unto our state,)
 But to recover of us, by strong hand,
 And terms compulsatory,⁹ those foresaid lands

and carrying of the article, the covenant entered into to confirm that bargain. Hence we see the common reading [*covenant*] makes a tautology. WARBURTON.

Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads — as by the same *covenant*: for which the late editions have given us — as by that *covenant*.

Co-mart is, I suppose, a joint bargain, a word perhaps of our poet's coinage. A *mart* signifying a great fair or market, he would not have scrupled to have written — *to mart*, in the sense of *to make a bargain*. In the preceding speech we find *mart* used for bargain or purchase. MALONE.

He has not scrupled so to write in *Cymbeline*:

“ ——— to mart,

“ As in a Romish stew,” &c.

See Vol. XIX. p. 58. STEEVENS.

And carriage of the article design'd,] Carriage, is import: design'd, is formed, drawn up between them. JOHNSON.

Cawdrey in his *Alphabetical Table*, 1604, defines the verb *design* thus: “ To marke out or appoint for any purpose.” See also Minshew's *Did.* 1617. “ To *designe* or shew by a token.” *Designed* is yet used in this sense in Scotland. The old copies have *designe*. The correction was made by the editor of the second folio.

MALONE.

⁶ *Of unimproved &c.*] Full of unimproved mettle, is full of spirit not regulated or guided by knowledge or experience. JOHNSON.

⁷ *Shark'd up a list &c.*] I believe, to *shark up* means to pick up without distinction, as the *shark*-fish collects his prey. The quartos read *lawless*, instead of *landless*. STEEVENS.

⁸ *That hath a stomach in't:*] *Stomach*, in the time of our author, was used for constancy, resolution. JOHNSON.

⁹ *And terms compulsatory,*] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio — *compulsive*. STEEVENS.

So by his father lost: And this, I take it,
Is the main motive of our preparations;
The source of this our watch; and the chief head
Of this post-haste and romage^a in the land.

[BER. I think,³ it be no other, but even so;
Well may it fort,⁴ that this portentous figure
Comes armed through our watch; so like the king
That was, and is, the question of these wars.⁵

^a — romage —] Tumultuous hurry. JOHNSON.

Commonly written — rummage. STEEVENS.

³ [I think, &c.] These, and all other lines confined within
crotches throughout this play, are omitted in the folio edition of
1623. The omissions leave the play sometimes better and sometimes
worse, and seem made only for the sake of abbreviation.

JOHNSON.

It may be worth while to observe, that the title-pages of the
first quartos in 1604 and 1605, declare this play to be *enlarged to
almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect copy.*

Perhaps therefore many of its absurdities as well as beauties arose
from the quantity added after it was first written. Our poet might
have been more attentive to the amplification than the coherence
of his fable.

The degree of credit due to the title-page that styles the MS.
from which the quartos 1604 and 1605 were printed, the *true and
perfect copy*, may also be disputable. I cannot help supposing this
publication to contain all Shakspeare rejected, as well as all he sup-
plied. By restorations like the former, contending booksellers or
theatres might have gained some temporary advantage over each
other, which at this distance of time is not to be understood. The
patience of our ancestors exceeded our own, could it have out-
lasted the tragedy of *Hamlet* as it is now printed; for it must have
occupied almost five hours in representation. If, however, it was
too much dilated on the ancient stage, it is as injudiciously con-
tracted on the modern one. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Well may it fort,*] The cause and effect are proportionate and
suitable. JOHNSON.

⁵ — the question of these wars.] The theme or subject. So,
in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“ — You were the word of war.” MALONE.

HOR. A mote it is,⁶ to trouble the mind's eye.
 In the most high and palmy state of Rome,⁷
 A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
 The graves flood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
 Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.

— — — — —
 As, stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
 Disasters in the sun;⁸ and the moist star,⁹

⁶ *A mote it is,*] The first quarto reads — *a moth*. STEEVENS.

A moth was only the old spelling of *mote*, as I suspected in revising a passage in *King John*, Vol. XI. p. 412, n. 6, where we certainly should read *mote*. MALONE.

⁷ — palmy state of Rome,] *Palmy*, for *victorious*. POPE.

⁸ *As, stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,*
Disasters in the sun;] Mr. Rowe altered these lines, because they have insufficient connection with the preceding ones, thus:

Stars shone with trains of fire, dews of blood fell,
Disasters veil'd the sun, — —.

This passage is not in the folio. By the quartos therefore our imperfect text is supplied; for an intermediate verse being evidently lost, it were idle to attempt a union that never was intended. I have therefore signified the supposed deficiency by a vacant space.

When Shakspeare had told us that *the graves flood tenantless*, &c. which are wonders confined to the earth, he naturally proceeded to say (in the line now lost) that *yet other prodigies appeared in the sky*; and these phænomena he exemplified by adding, — *As* [i. e. as for instance] *Stars with trains of fire*, &c. STEEVENS.

Disasters dimm'd the sun;] The quarto, 1604, reads:

Disasters in the sun; — —.

For the emendation I am responsible. It is strongly supported not only by Plutarch's account in the life of Cæsar, [*"also the brightness of the sunne was darkened, the which, all that yeare through, rose very pale, and shined not out,"*] but by various passages in our author's works. So, in *The Tempest*:

" — — — — I have be-dimm'd

" The noon-tide sun."

Again, in *King Richard II*:

" As doth the blushing discontented sun, —

" When he perceives the envious clouds are bent

" To dim his glory."

Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.

Again, in our author's 18th Sonnet:

" Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines,

" And often is his gold complexion dimm'd."

I suspect that the words *As stars* are a corruption, and have no doubt that either a line preceding or following the first of those quoted at the head of this note, has been lost; or that the beginning of one line has been joined to the end of another, the intervening words being omitted. That such conjectures are not merely chimerical, I have already proved. See Vol. XII. p. 357, &c. n. 7; and Vol. XV. p. 329, n. 7.

The following lines in *Julius Cæsar*, in which the prodigies that are said to have preceded his death, are recounted, may throw some light on the passage before us:

" ——— There is one within,
" Besides the things that we have heard and seen,
" Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.
" A lioness hath whelped in the streets;
" And graves have yawn'd and yielded up their dead;
" Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,
" In ranks, and squadrons, and right form of war,
" Which drizzled blood upon the capitol:
" The noise of battle hurtled in the air,
" Horses do neigh, and dying men did groan;
" And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets."

The lost words perhaps contained a description of *fiery warriors fighting on the clouds*, or of *brands burning bright beneath the stars*.

The 15th book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, translated by Golding, in which an account is given of the prodigies that preceded Cæsar's death, furnished Shakspeare with some of the images in both these passages:

" — battels fighting in the clouds with crashing armour
flew,
" And dreadful trumpets sounded in the ayre, and hornes
eke blew,
" As warning men beforehand of the mischief that did
brew:
" And Phœbus also looking *dim* did cast a drowfie light,
" Uppon the earth, which seemde likewise to be in sory
plight:
" From underneath beneath the starres brandes oft seemde
burning bright:

And even^a the like precurse of fierce events,^b
As harbingers preceding still the fates,

"It often rain'd drops of blood. The morning star look'd
blew,

"And was bespotted here and there with specks of rustie hew.

"The moone had also spots of blood.—

"Salt teares from ivorie—images in sundry places fell;

"The dogges did howle, and every where appeared ghastly
sprights,

"And with an earthquake shaken was the towne."—

Plutarch only says, that "the sunne was darkened," that "diverse
men were seen going up and down in fire;" there were "fires in
the element; sprites were seene running up and downe in the night,
and solitarie birds sitting in the great market-place."

The disagreeable recurrence of the word *stars* in the second line
induces me to believe that *As stars* in that which precedes, is a cor-
ruption. Perhaps Shakspeare wrote:

Astres with trains of fire,—

———— and dewes of blood

Disastrous dimm'd the sun.

The word *astre* is used in an old collection of poems entitled
Diana, addressed to the Earl of Oxenforde, a book of which I
know not the date, but believe it was printed about 1580. In
Othello we have *antres*, a word exactly of a similar formation.

MALONE.

The word—*astre* (which is no where else to be found) was af-
fectedly taken from the French by John Southern, author of the
poems cited by Mr. Malone. This wretched plagiarist stands in-
debted both for his verbiage and his imagery to *Ronsard*. See the
European Magazine, for June, 1788, p. 389. STEEVENS.

^a ———— and the moist star, &c.] i. e. the moon. So, in Marlowe's
Hero and Leander, 1598:

"Not that night-wand'ring, pale, and watry star," &c.

MALONE.

^b And even—] Not only such prodigies have been seen in
Rome, but the elements have shown our countrymen like forerun-
ners and foretokens of violent events. JOHNSON.

^c ———— precurse of fierce events, Fierce, for terrible.

WARBURTON.

I rather believe that *fierce* signifies *conspicuous*, *glaring*. It is used
in a somewhat similar sense in *Timon of Athens*:

"O the fierce wretchedness that glory brings!"

Again, in *King Henry VIII.* we have "*fierce vanities*."

STEEVENS.

And prologue to the omen coming on,⁴ —
 Have heaven and earth together démonstrated
 Unto our climatures and countrymen.—]

Re-enter Ghost.

But, soft; behold! lo, where it comes again!
 I'll cross it, though it blast me.—Stay, illusion!
 If thou hast any sound,⁶ or use of voice,

⁴ *And prologue to the omen coming on,]* But *prologue* and *omen* are merely synonymous here. The poet means, that these strange *phenomena* are prologues and forerunners of the events *presag'd*; and such sense the slight alteration, which I have ventured to make, by changing *omen* to *omen'd*, very aptly gives. THEOBALD.

Omen, for fate. Warburton.

Hammer follows Theobald.

A distich from the life of Merlin, by Heywood, however, will show that there is no occasion for correction:

“Merlin well vers'd in many a hidden spell,

“His countries *omen* did long since foretell.” FARMER.

Again, in *The Vowbreaker*:

“And much I fear the weakness of her braine

“Should draw her to some *ominous* exigent.”

Omen, I believe, is danger. STEEVENS.

And even the like precurse of fierce events,

As harbingers preceding still the fates,

And prologue to the omen coming on,] So, in one of our author's poems:

“But thou shrieking *harbinger*

“Foul *precurser* of the fiend,

“*Augur* of the fever's end,” &c.

The *omen coming on* is, the approaching dreadful and portentous event. So, in *King Richard III*:

“Thy name is *ominous* to children.”

i. e. (not boding ill fortune, but) *destructive* to children.

Again, *ibidem*:

“O Pomfret, Pomfret, O, thou bloody prison,

“Fatal and *ominous* to noble peers.” MALONE.

⁶ *If thou hast any sound,]* The speech of Horatio to the spectre is very elegant and noble, and congruous to the common traditions of the causes of apparitions. JOHNSON.

Speak to me:

If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,

Speak to me:

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,

O, speak!

Or, if thou hast uphoarded⁷ in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
[Cock crows.

Speak of it:—flay, and speak.—Stop it, Marcellus.

MAR. Shall I strike at it with my partizan?

HOR. Do, if it will not stand.⁸

BER.

'Tis here!

HOR.

'Tis here!

⁷ Or, if thou hast uphoarded &c.] So, in Decker's *Knight's Conjuring*, &c. "—— If any of them had bound the spirit of gold by any charms in caves, or in iron fetters under the ground, they should for their own souls quiet (which questionlesse else would whine up and down) if not for the good of their children, release it."

STEEVENS.

⁸ —— Stop it, Marcellus.——

HOR. Do, if it will not stand.] I am unwilling to suppose that Shakspeare could appropriate these absurd effusions to *Horatio*, who is a scholar, and has sufficiently proved his good understanding by the propriety of his addresses to the phantom. Such a man therefore must have known that

"As easy might he the intrenchant air

"With his keen sword impress,"

as commit any act of violence on the royal shadow. The words—*Stop it, Marcellus*,—and *Do, if it will not stand*—better suit the next speaker, *Bernardo*, who, in the true spirit of an unlettered officer, *nihil non arroget armis*. Perhaps the first idea that occurs to a man of this description, is to strike at what offends him. Nicholas Poussin, in his celebrated picture of the Crucifixion, has introduced a similar occurrence. When lots are casting for the sacred vesture, the graves are giving up their dead. This prodigy is perceived by one of the soldiers, who instantly grasps his sword, as if preparing to defend himself, or resent such an invasion from the other world.

MAR. 'Tis gone!

[Exit Ghost.

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
To offer it the show of violence;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,⁸
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

BER. It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

HOR. And then it started, like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,⁹
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day; and, at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,²

The two next speeches—'Tis here!—'Tis here!—may be allotted to *Marcellus and Bernardo*; and the third—'Tis gone! &c. to *Horatio*, whose superiority of character indeed seems to demand it.—As the text now stands, *Marcellus* proposes to strike the Ghost with his partizan, and yet afterwards is made to descant on the indecorum and impotence of such an attempt.

The names of speakers have so often been confounded by the first publishers of our author, that I suggest this change with less hesitation than I should express concerning any conjecture that could operate to the disadvantage of his words or meaning.—Had the assignment of the old copies been such, would it have been thought liable to objection? STEEVENS.

⁸ *it is, as the air, invulnerable,]* So, in *Macbeth*:

“As easy may'st thou the intrenchant air

“With thy keen sword impress.”

Again, in *King John*:

“Against the invulnerable clouds of heaven.” MALONE.

⁹ *The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,]* So, the quarto, 1604. Folio—to the day.

In *England's Parnassus*, 8vo. 1600, I find the two following lines ascribed to Drayton, but know not in which of his poems they are found:

“And now the cocke, the morning's trumpeter,

“Play'd huntup for the day-star to appear.”

Mr. Gray has imitated our poet:

“The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,

“No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.”

MALONE.

² *Whether in sea &c.]* According to the pneumatology of

The extravagant⁴ and erring spirit hies

that time, every element was inhabited by its peculiar order of spirits, who had dispositions different, according to their various places of abode. The meaning therefore is, that all *spirits extravagant*, wandering out of their element, whether aerial spirits visiting earth, or earthly spirits ranging the air, return to their station, to their proper limits in which they are *confined*. We might read :

“ — And at his warning
 “ Th’extravagant and erring spirit hies
 “ To his confine, whether in sea or air,
 “ Or earth, or fire. And of,” &c.

But this change, though it would smoothe the construction, is not necessary, and, being unnecessary, should not be made against authority. JOHNSON.

A Chorus in Andreini’s drama, called *Adamo*, written in 1613. consists of spirits of fire, air, water, and hell, or subterraneous, being the exiled angels. “Choro di Spiriti ignei, aerei, acquatici, ed infernali,” &c. These are the demons to which Shakspeare alludes. These spirits were supposed to controul the elements in which they respectively resided; and when formally invoked or commanded by a magician, to produce tempests, conflagrations, floods, and earthquakes. For thus says *The Spanish Mandevile of Miracles*, &c. 1600: “Those which are in the middle region of the ayre, and those that are under them nearer the earth, are those, which sometimes out of the ordinary operation of nature doe moove the windes with greater fury than they are accustomed, and do, out of season, congeele the cloudes causing it to thunder, lighten, hayle, and to destroy the grasse, corne, &c. &c — Witches and negromancers worke many such like things by the help of those spirits,” &c. *Ibid.* Of this schoole therefore was Shakspeare’s Prospero in *The Tempest*. T. WARTON.

Bourne of Newcastle, in his *Antiquities of the common People*, informs us, “It is a received tradition among the vulgar, that at the time of cock-crowing, the midnight spirits forsake these lower regions and, go to their proper places. — Hence it is, (says he) that in country places, where the way of life requires more early labour, they always go chearfully to work at that time; whereas if they are called abroad sooner, they imagine every thing they see, a wandering ghost.” And he quotes on this occasion, as all his predecessors had done, the well-known lines from the first hymn of *Prudentius*. I know not whose translation he gives us, but there is an old one by Heywood. The pious chansons, the hymns and carols, which Shakspeare mentions presently, were usually copied from the elder Christian poets. FARMER.

To his confine: and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

MAR. It faded on the crowing of the cock.⁴
Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;⁵
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes,⁷ nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

⁴ *The extravagant*—] i. e. got out of his bounds.

WARBURTON.

So, in *Nobody and Somebody*, 1598: "—— they took me up for a *'stravagant*."

Shakspeare imputes the same effect to *Aurora's harbinger* in the last scene of the third act of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. See Vol. VII. p. 112. STEEVENS.

⁵ *It faded on the crowing of the cock.*] This is a very ancient superstition. Philostratus giving an account of the apparition of Achilles' shade to Apollonius Tyaneus, says that it vanished with a little glimmer as soon as the cock crowed. Vit. Apol. iv. 16.

STEEVENS.

Faded has here its original sense; it *vanished*. *Vado*, Lat. So, in Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, Book I. c. v. st. 15:

"He stands amazed how he thence should fade."

That our author uses the word in this senses, appears from the following lines:

"—— The morning cock crew loud;

"And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,

"And *vanish'd* from our sight." MALONE.

⁶ —— dares stir abroad;] Thus the quarto. The folio reads — *can walk*. STEEVENS.

Spirit was formerly used as a monosyllable: *sprite*. The quarto, 1604, has — *dare* stir abroad. Perhaps Shakspeare wrote — no *spirits* dare stir abroad. The necessary correction was made in a late quarto of no authority, printed in 1637. MALONE.

⁷ *No fairy takes,*] No fairy strikes with lameness or diseases. This sense of *take* is frequent in this author. JOHNSON.

So, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*:

"And there he blasts the tree, and *takes* the cattle.

STEEVENS.

HOR. So have I heard, and do in part believe it.
 But, look, the morn, in ruffet mantle clad,
 Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill:⁸
 Break we our watch up; and, by my advice,
 Let us impart what we have seen to-night
 Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,
 This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him:
 Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
 As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

MAR. Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning
 know

Where we shall find him most convenient.

[*Exeunt.*]

⁸ ——— *high eastern hill:*] The old quarto has it better *eastward*.

WARBURTON.

The superiority of the latter of these readings is not, to me at least, very apparent. I find the former used in *Lingua*, &c. 1607:

" ——— and overclimbs

" Yonder gilt *eastern hills*."

Again, in Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*, Book IV. Sat. iv. p. 75, edit. 1616:

" And ere the sunne had clymb'd the *easterne hills*."

Eastern and *eastward*, alike signify toward the east.

STEEVENS.

S C E N E II.

The same. A Room of State in the same.

*Enter the King, Queen, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LA-
ERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and
Attendants.*

KING. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's
death

The memory be green; and that it us befitted¹
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe;
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature,
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress of this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere, with a defeated joy,—
With one auspicious, and one dropping eye;²

¹ ——— and that it us befitted —] Perhaps our author elliptically wrote,

——— and us befitted —.

i. e. and that it befitted us. STEEVENS.

² With one auspicious, and one dropping eye:] Thus the folio.
The quarto, with somewhat less of quaintness:

With an auspicious, and a dropping eye.

The same thought, however, occurs in *The Winter's Tale*: "She had one eye declined for the loss of her husband; another elevated that the oracle was fulfilled."

After all, perhaps, we have here only the ancient proverbial phrase—"To cry with one eye and laugh with the other," buckram'd by our author for the service of tragedy. See *Ray's Collection*, edit. 1768, p. 188. STEEVENS.

Dropping in this line probably means *depressed* or cast downwards: an interpretation which is strongly supported by the passage already quoted from *The Winter's Tale*. It may, however, signify *weeping*.

With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,
 In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—
 Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd
 Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
 With this affair along:—For all, our thanks.

Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,—
 Holding a weak supposal of our worth;
 Or thinking, by our late dear brother's death,
 Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
 Colleagu'd with this dream of his advantage,³
 He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
 Importing the surrender of those lands
 Lost by his father, with all bands of law.
 To our most valiant brother.—So much for him.
 Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting.
 Thus much the business is: We have here writ
 To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,—
 Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
 Of this his nephew's purpose,—to suppress
 His further gait herein;⁴ in that the levies,

"Dropping of the eyes" was a technical expression in our author's time.—"If the spring be wet with much south wind,—the next summer will happen agues and blearness, *dropping of the eyes*, and pains of the bowels." Hopton's *Concordance of years*, 8vo. 1616.

Again, in Montaigne's *Essays*, 1603: — they never saw any man there—with eyes *dropping*, or crooked and stooping through age." MALONE.

³ Colleagu'd with this dream of his advantage,] The meaning is,—He goes to war so indiscreetly, and unprepared, that he has no allies to support him but a *dream*, with which he is *colleagu'd* or confederated. WARBURTON.

Mr. Theobald, in his *Shakspeare Restored*, proposed to read—*collogued*, but in his edition very properly adhered to the ancient copies. MALONE.

This *dream of his advantage* (as Mr. M. Mason observes) means only "this imaginary advantage, which Fortinbras hoped to derive from the unsettled state of the kingdom." STEEVENS.

⁴ ——— to suppress

His further gait herein,] Gate or gait is here used in the

The lists, and full proportions, are all made
 Out of his subject:—and we here despatch
 You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
 For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;
 Giving to you no further personal power
 To business with the king, more than the scope⁵
 Of these dilated articles⁶ allow.

Farewell; and let your haste commend your duty.

COR. VOL. In that, and all things, will we show
 our duty.

KING. We doubt it nothing; heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.*]

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
 You told us of some suit; What is't, Laertes?
 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
 And lose your voice: What would'st thou beg,
 Laertes,

That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
 The head is not more native to the heart,
 The hand more instrumental to the mouth,

northern sense, for *proceeding, passage*; from the A. S. verb *gao*.
 A *gate* for a path, passage, or street, is still current in the north.
 PERCY.

⁵ — *more than the scope*—] More is comprized in the general
 design of these articles, which you may explain in a more diffuse
 and dilated style. JOHNSON.

⁶ — *these dilated articles &c.*] i. e. the articles when dilated.
 MUSGRAVE.

The poet should have written *allows*. Many writers fall into
 this error, when a plural noun immediately precedes the verb; as
 I have had occasion to observe in a note on a controverted passage
 in *Love's Labour's Lost*. So, in *Julius Cæsar*:

“The *posture* of your *blows* are yet unknown.”

Again, in *Cymbeline*: “— and the *approbation* of *those* are
 wonderfully to extend him.” MALONE.

Surely, all such defects in our author, were merely the errors of
 illiterate transcribers or printers. STEEVENS.

Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.⁷
What would'st thou have, Laertes?

LAER. My dread lord,
Your leave and favour to return to France;
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,

To show my duty in your coronation;
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

KING. Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

POL. He hath, my lord, [wrung from me my slow leave,⁸

By laboursome petition; and, at last,
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent:]
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

KING. Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,
And thy best graces: spend it at thy will.⁹—

⁷ *The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.]* The sense seems to be this: The head is not formed to be more useful to the heart, the hand is not more at the service of the mouth, than my power is at your father's service. That is, he may command me to the utmost, he may do what he pleases with my kingly authority.

STEEVENS.

By *native to the heart* Dr. Johnson understands, "natural and congenial to it, born with it, and co-operating with it."

Formerly the heart was supposed the seat of wisdom; and hence the poet speaks of the close connexion between the heart and head. See Vol. XVII. p. 214, n. 9. MALONE.

⁸ — — [*wrung from me my slow leave,*] These words and the two following lines are omitted in the folio. MALONE.

⁹ *Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,
And thy best graces: spend it at thy will.* The sense is,—You have my leave to go, Laertes; make the fairest use you please of your time, and spend it at your will with the fairest graces you are master of." THEOBALD.

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,——

HAM. A little more than kin, and less than kind.^a

[*Aside.*

So, in *King Henry VIII*:

“—— and bear the inventory

“ Of your *best graces* in your mind. STEEVENS.

I rather think this line is in want of emendation. I read:

—— time is thine,

And my *best graces*: spend it at thy will. JOHNSON.

^a Ham, *A little more than kin, and less than kind.*] Kind is the Teutonic word for *child*. Hamlet therefore answers with propriety, to the titles of *cousin* and *son*, which the king had given him, that he was somewhat more than *cousin*, and less than *son*.

JOHNSON.

In this line, with which Shakspeare introduces *Hamlet*, Dr. Johnson has perhaps pointed out a nicer distinction than it can justly boast of. To establish the sense contended for, it should have been proved that *kind* was ever used by any English writer for *child*. *A little more than kin*, is a little more than a common relation. The king was certainly something *less than kind*, by having betrayed the mother of Hamlet into an indecent and incestuous marriage, and obtained the crown by means which he suspects to be unjustifiable. In the fifth act, the prince accuses his uncle of having *pop'd* in between the election and his hopes, which obviates D. Warburton's objection to the old reading, viz. that “the king had given no occasion for such a reflection.”

A jingle of the same sort is found in *Mother Bombs*, 1594, and seems to have been proverbial, as I have met with it more than once: “—— the nearer we are in blood, the further we must be from love; the greater the *kindred* is, the less the *kindness* must be.”

Again, in *Gorboduc*, a tragedy, 1561:

“In kinde a father, but not *kindelyness*.”

As *kind*, however, signifies *nature*, Hamlet may mean that his relationship was become an *unnatural* one, as it was partly founded upon incest. Our author's *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *King Richard II.* and *Titus Andronicus*, exhibit instances of *kind* being used for *nature*; and so too in this play of *Hamlet*, Act II. sc. the last:

“Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, *kindless* villain.”

Dr. Farmer, however, observes that *kin*, is still used for *cousin* in the midland counties. STEEVENS.

Hamlet does not, I think, mean to say, as Mr. Steevens supposes,

KING. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAM. Not so, my lord, I am too much i'the sun.³

QUEEN. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,

And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.

Do not, for ever, with thy vailed lids⁴

Seek for thy noble father in the dust:

Thou know'st, 'tis common; all, that live, must die,⁵

Passing through nature to eternity.

HAM. Ay, madam, it is common.

that *his uncle* is a little more than kin, &c. The King had called the prince—"My cousin Hamlet, and my son."—His reply, therefore, is,—"*I am a little more than thy kinsman, [for I am thy stepson;] and somewhat less than kind to thee, [for I hate thee as being the person who has entered into an incestuous marriage with my mother]. Or, if we understand kind in its ancient sense, then the meaning will be,—I am more than thy kinsman, for I am thy step-son; being such, I am less near to thee than thy natural offspring, and therefore not entitled to the appellation of son, which you have now given me.*" MALONE.

³ — *too much i'the sun.*] He perhaps alludes to the proverb, "Out of heaven's blessing into the warm sun." JOHNSON.

— *too much i'the sun.*] Meaning probably his being sent for from his studies to be exposed at his uncle's marriage as his *chiefest courtier*, &c. STEEVENS.

I question whether a quibble between *sun* and *son* be not here intended. FARMER.

⁴ — *vailed lids* —] With lowering eyes, cast down eyes.

JOHNSON.

So, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

"*Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs.*" STEEVENS.

See Vol. XIII. p. 17, n. 4. MALONE.

⁵ *Thou know'st, 'tis common; all, that live, must die.*] Perhaps the semicolon placed in this line, is improper. The sense, elliptically expressed, is,—Thou knowest it is common *that* all that live, must die.—The first *that* is omitted for the sake of metre, a practice often followed by Shakspeare. STEEVENS.

QUEEN. If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?
HAM. Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not
seems.

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy fuspuration of forc'd breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief,⁶
That can denote me truly: These indeed, seem,
For they are actions that a man might play:
But I have that within, which passeth show;
These, but the trappings and the suits of woe.'

KING. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your na-
ture, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father:
But, you must know, your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his;⁸ and the survivor bound

⁶ — shows of grief,] Thus the folio. The first quarto reads—
shapes—I suppose for *shapes*. STEEVENS.

⁷ But I have that within, which passeth show;
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.] So, in King
Richard II:

" — my grief lies all within;
" And these external manners of lament
" Are merely shadows to the unseen grief
" That swells with silence in the tortur'd soul."

MALONE

⁸ — your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his;] Mr. Pope judiciously corrected the
faulty copies thus:

— your father lost a father;
That father, his;—

On which the editor Mr. Theobald thus descants,—*This supposed
refinement is from Mr. Pope, but all the editions else, that I have met
with, old and modern, read,*

That father lost, lost his;—

The reduplication of which word here gives an energy and an

In filial obligation, for some term
 To do obsequious sorrow: But to persevere
 In obstinate condolment,² is a course
 Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief:
 It shows a will most incorrect³ to heaven;
 A heart unfortified, or mind impatient;
 An understanding simple and unschool'd:
 For what, we know, must be, and is as common
 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
 Why should we, in our peevish opposition,
 Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,

elegance, WHICH IS MUCH EASIER TO BE CONCEIVED THAN EXPLAINED IN TERMS. I believe so: for when explained in terms it comes to this:—That father after he had lost himself, lost his father. But the reading is ex fide codicis, and that is enough.

HOLT WHITE.

I do not admire the repetition of the word, but it has so much of our author's manner, that I find no temptation to recede from the old copies. JOHNSON.

The meaning of the passage is no more than this,—*Your father lost a father, i. e. your grandfather, which lost grandfather, also lost his father.*

The metre, however, in my opinion, shows that Mr. Pope's correction should be adopted. The sense, though elliptically expressed, will still be the same. STEEVENS.

¹ ——— obsequious sorrow:] *Obsequious* is her from *obsequies*, or funeral ceremonies. JOHNSON.

So, in *Titus Andronicus*:

“To shed *obsequious* tears upon his trunk.”

See Vol. XV. p. 265, n. 2. MALONE.

² In obstinate condolment,] *Condolment*, for sorrow.

WARBURTON.

³ ——— a will most incorrect —] *Incorrect*, for untutor'd.

WARBURTON.

Incorrect does not mean *untutored*, as Warburton explains it; but *ill-regulated*, not sufficiently subdued. M. MASON.

Not sufficiently regulated by a sense of duty and submission to the dispensations of providence. MALONE.

To reason most absurd;⁴ whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cry'd,
From the first corse, till he that died to-day,
This must be so. We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe; and think of us
As of a father: for let the world take note,
You are the most immediate to our throne;
And, with no less nobility of love,⁵
Than that which dearest father bears his son,
Do I impart toward you.⁶ For your intent

⁴ *To reason most absurd;*] *Reason* is here used in its common sense, for the *faculty* by which we form conclusions from arguments.
JOHNSON.

⁵ *And, with no less nobility of love,*] *Nobility*, for *magnitude*.
WARBURTON:

Nobility is rather *generosity*. JOHNSON.

By *nobility of love*, Mr. Heath understands, *eminence and distinction of love*. MALONE.

So, afterwards, the Ghost, describing his affection for the Queen:

“To me, whose *love was that of dignity*” &c. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Do I impart toward you.*] I believe *impart* is, *impart myself, communicate* whatever I can bestow. JOHNSON.

The crown of Denmark was elective. So, in *Sir Clyomon Knight of the Golden Shield*, &c. 1599:

“And me possess for spoused wife, who in *election* am

“To have the *crown of Denmark* here, as heir unto the same.”

The king means, that as Hamlet stands the fairest chance to be next elected, he will strive with as much love to ensure the crown to him, as a father would show in the continuance of heirdom to a son. STEEVENS.

I agree with Mr. Steevens, that the crown of Denmark (as in most of the Gothick kingdoms) was elective, and not hereditary; though it might be customary, in elections, to pay some attention to the royal blood, which by degrees produced hereditary succession. Why then do the rest of the commentators so often treat Claudius as an *usurper*, who had deprived young Hamlet of his *right* by *heirship* to his father's crown? Hamlet calls him drunkard, murderer, and villain; one who had carried the election by low and mean practices; had

“Popp'd in between the election and my hopes——”

In going back to school in Wittenberg,⁷
 It is most retrograde to our desire:
 And, we beseech you, bend you to remain⁸
 Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
 Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

QUEEN. Let not thy mother lose her prayers,
 Hamlet;

I pray thee, stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

HAM. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

KING. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply;
 Be as ourself in Denmark.—Madam, come;
 This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet

had

“ From a shelf the precious diadem stole,

“ And put it in his pocket:”

but never hints at his being an *usurper*. His discontent arose from his uncle's being preferred before him, not from any legal right which he pretended to set up to the crown. Some regard was probably had to the recommendation of the preceding prince, in electing the successor. And therefore young Hamlet had “ the voice of the king himself for his succession in Denmark;” and he at his own death prophesies that “ the election would light on Fortinbras, who had his dying voice,” conceiving that by the death of his uncle, he himself had been king for an instant, and had therefore a right to recommend. When, in the fourth act, the rabble wished to choose Laertes king, I understand that antiquity was forgot, and custom violated, by electing a new king in the life-time of the old one, and perhaps also by the calling in a stranger to the royal blood. BLACKSTONE.

⁷ — to school in Wittenberg,] In Shakspeare's time there was an university at Wittenberg, to which he has made Hamlet propose to return.

The university of Wittenberg was not founded till 1502, consequently did not exist in the time to which this play is referred.

MALONE.

Our author may have derived his knowledge of this famous university from *The Life of Iacke Wilton*, 1594, or *The History of Doctor Faustus*, of whom the *second report* (printed in the same year) is said to be “ written by an English gentleman, student in Wittenberg, an University of Germany in Saxony.” RITSON.

⁸ — bend you to remain —] i. e. subdue your inclination to go from hence, and remain, &c. STEEVENS.

Sits smiling to my heart:⁸ in grace whereof,
No jocund health,⁹ that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell;
And the king's rouse² the heaven shall bruit again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Exeunt* King, Queen, Lords, &c. POLONIUS,
and LAERTES.

HAM. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!³
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!⁴ O God! O God!

⁸ *Sits smiling to my heart:*] Thus, the dying Lothario:

"That sweet revenge comes smiling to my thoughts."

STEEVENS.

Sits smiling to my heart:] Surely it should be—

Sits smiling on my heart. RITSON.

To my heart, I believe, signifies—*near to, close, next to, my heart.*

STEEVENS.

⁹ *No jocund health,*] The king's intemperance is very strongly impressed; every thing that happens to him gives him occasion to drink. JOHNSON.

² — the king's rouse —] i. e. the king's draught of jollity.

See *Othello*, A& II. sc. iii. STEEVENS.

So, in Marlowe's *Tragical Historie of Doctor Faustus*:

"He tooke his rouse with sloopes of Rhennish wine." RITSON.

³ — resolve itself into a dew!] *Resolve* means the same as *dissolve*. Ben Jonson uses the word in his *Volpone*, and in the same sense:

"Forth the resolved corners of his eyes."

Again, in *The Country Girl*, 1647:

"— my swollen grief, resolved in these tears." STEEVENS.

⁴ *Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd*

His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!] The generality of the editions read *cannon*, as if the poet's thought were, — *Or that the Almighty had not planted his artillery, or arms of vengeance, against self-murder.* But the word which I restored (and which was espoused by the accurate Mr. Hughes, who gave an edition of this play) is the true reading, i. e. *that he had not restrained suicide by his express law and peremptory prohibition.* THEOBALD.

There are yet those who suppose the old reading to be the true

How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank, and gross in nature,

Possess it merely.⁵ That it should come to this!
But two months dead!—nay, not so much, not two:

So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr:⁶ so loving to my mother,

one, as they say the word *fixed* seems to decide very strongly in its favour. I would advise such to recollect Virgil's expression:

“ ——— *fixit leges pretio, atque refixit.*” STEEVENS.

If the true reading wanted any support, it might be found in *Cymbeline*:

“ ——— *'gainst self slaughter*

“ There is a *prohibition* so divine,

“ That cravens my weak hand.”

In Shakspeare's time *canon* (*norma*) was commonly spelt *cannon*.

MALONE.

⁵ ——— *merely.*] is entirely, absolutely. See Vol. IV. p. 9, n. 5; and Vol. XVII. p. 333, n. 6. STEEVENS.

⁶ *So excellent a king; that was, to this,*

Hyperion to a satyr:] This similitude at first sight seems to be a little far-fetched; but it has an exquisite beauty. By the *Satyr* is meant *Pan*, as by *Hyperion*, *Apollo*. *Pan* and *Apollo* were brothers, and the allusion is to the contention between those gods for the preference in music. WARBURTON.

All our English poets are guilty of the same false quantity, and call *Hyperion* *Hyperion*; at least the only instance I have met with to the contrary, is in the old play of *Fuimus Troes*, 1633:

“ ——— Blow gentle *Africus*,

“ Play on our poops, when *Hyperion's* son

“ Shall couch in west.”

Shakspeare, I believe, has no allusion in the present instance, except to the beauty of *Apollo*, and its immediate opposite, the deformity of a *Satyr*. STEEVENS.

Hyperion or *Apollo* is represented in all the ancient statues, &c. as exquisitely beautiful, the *satyrs* hideously ugly. — Shakspeare may surely be pardoned for not attending to the quantity of Latin names, here and in *Cymbeline*; when we find *Henry Parrot*, the

That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth !

author of a collection of epigrams printed in 1613, to which a Latin preface is prefixed, writing thus :

“ *Posthumus*, not the last of many more,
“ Asks why I write in such an idle vaine,” &c.

Laquei ridiculosi, or Springes for Woodcocks, 16mo. sign. c. 3.

MALONE.

“ That he might not beteem the winds of heaven—] In former editions :

That he permitted not the winds of heaven—.

This is a sophisticated reading, copied from the players in some of the modern editions, for want of understanding the poet, whose text is corrupt in the old impressions: all of which that I have had the fortune to see, concur in reading:

—— *so loving to my mother,*

That he might not beteene the winds of heaven

Visit her face too roughly.

Beteene is a corruption without doubt, but not so inveterate a one, but that, by the change of a single letter, and the separation of two words mistakenly jumbled together, I am verily persuaded, I have retrieved the poet's reading—

That he might not let e'en the winds of heaven &c.

THEOBALD.

The obsolete and corrupted verb — *beteene*, (in the first folio) which should be written (as in all the quartos) *beteeme*, was changed, as above, by Mr. Theobald; and with the aptitude of his conjecture succeeding criticks appear to have been satisfied.

Beteeme, however, occurs in the tenth book of Arthur Golding's version of *Ovid's Metamorphosis*, 4to. 1587; and, from the corresponding Latin, must necessarily signify, to *vouchsafe*, *deign*, *permit*, or *suffer* :

“ —— Yet could he not *beteeme*

“ The shape of anie other bird than egle for to seeme.

Sign. R. i. b.

“ —— nulla tamen alite verti

“ *Dignatur*, nisi quæ possit sua fulmina ferre.” V. 157.

Jupiter (though anxious for the possession of Ganymede) would not *deign* to assume a meaner form, or *suffer* change into an humbler shape, than that of the august and vigorous fowl who bears the thunder in his pounces.

The existence and signification of the verb *beteem* being thus established, it follows, that the attention of Hamlet's father to his queen was exactly such as is described in the Enterlude of the

Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: And yet, within a month,—
Let me not think on't;—Frailty, thy name is wo-
man!—

A little month; or ere those shoes were old,
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears;⁸—why she, even she,—
O heaven! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer,—marry'd with my
uncle,

My father's brother; but no more like my father,
Than I to Hercules: Within a month;

Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalaine, &c. by Lewis Wager,
4to. 1567:

“But evermore they were unto me very tender,

“They would not suffer the wynde on me to blowe.”

I have therefore replaced the ancient reading, without the slightest hesitation, in the text.

This note was inserted by me in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, some years before Mr. Malone's edition of our author (in which the same justification of the old reading—*beteeme*, occurs,) had made its appearance. STEEVENS.

This passage ought to be a perpetual memento to all future editors and commentators to proceed with the utmost caution in emendation, and never to discard a word from the text, merely because it is not the language of the present day.

Mr. Hughes or Mr. Rowe, supposing the text to be unintelligible, for *beteem* boldly substituted *permitted*. M. Theobald, in order to favour his own emendation, stated untruly that *all* the old copies which he had seen, read *beteene*. His emendation appearing uncommonly happy, was adopted by all the subsequent editors.

We find a sentiment similar to that before us, in Marston's *Infant Countess*, 1603:

“————— (he had a lord,

“Jealous that air should ravish her chaste looks.” MALONE.

⁸ *Like Niobe, all tears;*] Shakspeare might have caught this idea from an ancient ballad intitled *The falling out of Lovers is the renewing of Love*:

“Now I, like weeping *Niobe*,

“May wash my handes in teares.” &c.

Of this ballad *Amantium ira* &c. is the burden. STEEVENS.

Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She marry'd :—O most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets !
It is not, nor it cannot come to, good ;
But break, my heart ; for I must hold my tongue !

Enter HORATIO, BERNARDO, and MARCELLUS.

HOR. Hail to your lordship !

HAM. I am glad to see you well :
Horatio,—or I do forget myself.

HOR. The same, my lord, and your poor servant
ever.

HAM. Sir, my good friend ; I'll change that name¹
with you.

And what make you² from Wittenberg, Horatio ?—
Marcellus ?

MAR. My good lord,—

HAM. I am very glad to see you ; good even, sir.³—
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg ?

¹ — *I'll change that name* —] I'll be your servant, you shall
be my friend. JOHNSON.

² — *what make you* —] A familiar phrase for *what are you
doing*. JOHNSON.

See Vol. VIII. p. 175, n. 5. STEEVENS.

³ — *good even, sir*.] So the copies. Sir Thomas Hanmer
and Dr. Warburton put it — *good morning*. The alteration is of no
importance, but all licence is dangerous. There is no need of any
change. Between the first and eighth scene of this act it is apparent,
that a natural day must pass, and how much of it is already over,
there is nothing that can determine. The king has held a council.
It may now as well be *evening* as *morning*. JOHNSON.

The change made by Sir T. Hanmer might be justified by what
Marcellus said of Hamlet at the conclusion of scene i :

“ — and I this *morning* know

“ Where we shall find him most convenient.” STEEVENS.

HOR. A truant disposition, good my lord.

HAM. I would not hear your enemy say so;
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself: I know, you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?

We'll teach you to drink deep, ere you depart.

HOR. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

HAM. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-
student;

I think, it was to see my mother's wedding.

HOR. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

HAM. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd
meats⁴

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

'Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven⁵

⁴ — *the funeral bak'd meats* —] It was anciently the general custom to give a cold entertainment to mourners at a funeral. In distant counties this practice is continued among the yeomanry. See *The Tragique Historie of the Faire Valeria of London*, 1598: "His corpes was with funerall pompe conveyed to the church, and there sollemnly enterred, nothing omitted which necessitie or custom could claime; a sermon, a banquet, and like observations." Again, in the old romance of *Syr Degore*, bl. l. no date:

"A great feaste would he holde

"Upon his quenes mornynge day,

"That was buried in an abbay." COLLINS.

See also Hayward's *Life and Raigne of King Henrie the Fourth*, 4to. 1599, p. 135: "Then hee [King Richard II.] was conveyed to Langley Abby in Buckinghamshire,—and there obscurely interred,—without the charge of a dinner for celebrating the funeral."

MALONE.

⁵ — *dearest foe in heaven* —] *Dearest* for *direst*, most dreadful, most dangerous. JOHNSON.

Dearest is most immediate, consequential, important. So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

"~~—~~ a ring that I must use

"In dear employment."

Or ever⁶ I had seen that day, Horatio! —
My father, — Methinks, I see my father.

HOR. Where,
My lord?

HAM. In my mind's eye,⁷ Horatio.

HOR. I saw him once, he was a goodly king.

HAM. He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.⁸

HOR. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

HAM. Saw! who?

HOR. My lord, the king your father.

Again, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid in the Mill*:

"You meet your *dearest* enemy in love,

"With all his hate about him." STEEVENS.

See Vol. XVII. p. 192, n. 7. MALONE.

⁶ Or ever —] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads — *ere* ever.
This is not the only instance in which a familiar phraseology has
been substituted for one more ancient, in that valuable copy.

MALONE.

⁷ In my mind's eye,] This expression occurs again in our author's
Rape of Lucrece:

" — himself behind

"Was left unseen, save to the eye of mind."

Ben Jonson has borrowed it in his Masque called *Love's Triumph
through Collipolis*:

"As only by the mind's eye may be seen."

Telemachus lamenting the absence of Ulysses, is represented in like
manner:

Ὅσσόμενος πατέρ' ἐσθλὸν ἐνὶ φρεσὶν. *Odys.* L. I. 115.

STEEVENS.

This expression occurs again in our author's 113th Sonnet:

"Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind." MALONE.

⁸ I shall not look upon his like again.] Mr. Holt proposes to read
from an emendation of Sir Thomas Samwell, Bart. of Upton, near
Northampton:

"Eye shall not look upon his like again;"

and thinks it is more in the true spirit of Shakspeare than the other.
So, in Stowe's *Chronicle*, p. 746: "In the greatest pomp that ever
eye behelde." Again, in Sandys's *Travels*, p. 150: "We went this
day through the most pregnant and pleasant valley that ever eye
beheld." STEEVENS.

HAM. The king my father?

HOR. Season your admiration⁹ for a while
With an attent ear;² till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

HAM. For God's love, let me hear.

HOR. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead waist and middle of the night,³
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Armed at point,⁴ exactly, cap-à-pé,
Appears before them, and, with solemn march,
Goes flow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd,
By their oppress'd and fear-surprized eyes,
Within this truncheon's length; whilst they, dis-
till'd

⁹ Season your admiration —] That is, temper it. JOHNSON.

² With an attent ear;] Spenser, as well as our poet, uses *attent* for *attentive*. MALONE.

³ In the dead waist and middle of the night,] This strange phraseology seems to have been common in the time of Shakspeare. By *waist* is meant nothing more than *middle*; and hence the epithet *dead* did not appear incongruous to our poet. So, in Marston's *Malecontent*, 1604:

“ 'Tis now about the immodest *waist* of night.”

i. e. midnight. Again, in *The Puritan*, a comedy, 1607: “ —
ere the day be spent to the *girdle*, —.”

In the old copies the word is spelt *wast*, as it is in the second act, sc. ii: “ Then you live about her *wast*, or in the middle of her favours.” The same spelling is found in *King Lear*, Act IV. sc. vi: “ Down from the *wast*, they are centaurs.” See also Minshew's Dict. 1617: “ *Wast*, *middle*, or *girdle*-stead.” We have the same pleonasm in another line in this play:

“ And given my heart a working *mute* and *dumb*.”

All the modern editors read — In the dead *waste* &c. MALONE.

Dead waste may be the true reading. See Vol. IV. p. 36, n. 4. STEEVENS.

⁴ Armed at point.] Thus the quartos. The folio:

Arm'd at all points. STEEVENS.

Almost to jelly with the act of fear,⁵
 Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me
 In dreadful secrecy impart they did;
 And I with them, the third night, kept the watch:
 Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
 Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
 The apparition comes: I knew your father;
 These hands are not more like.

HAM. But where was this?

MAR. My lord, upon the platform where we
 watch'd.

HAM. Did you not speak to it?⁶

⁵ — with the act of fear,] *Fear* was the cause, the active cause that distilled them by that force of operation which we strictly call *act* in voluntary, and *power* in involuntary agents, but popularly call *act* in both. JOHNSON.

The folio reads — *bestil'd*. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Did you not speak to it?*] Fielding, who was well acquainted with vulgar superstitions, in his *Tom Jones*, B. XI. ch. ii. observes that Mrs. Fitzpatrick, "like a ghost, only wanted to be spoke to," but then very readily answered. It seems from this passage, as well as from others in books too mean to be formally quoted, that spectres were supposed to maintain an obdurate silence, till interrogated by the people to whom they appeared.

The drift therefore of Hamlet's question is, whether his father's shade had been spoken to; and not whether Horatio, as a particular or privileged person, was the speaker to it. Horatio tells us he had seen the late king but once, and therefore cannot be imagined to have any particular interest with his apparition.

The vulgar notion that a ghost could only be spoken to with propriety and effect by a scholar, agrees very well with the character of Marcellus, a common officer; but it would have disgraced the Prince of Denmark to have supposed the spectre would more readily comply with Horatio's solicitation, merely because it was that of a man who had been studying at a university.

We are at liberty to think the Ghost would have replied to Francisco, Bernardo, or Marcellus, had either of them ventured to question it. It was actually preparing to address Horatio, when the cock crew. The convenience of Shakspeare's play, however, required that the phantom should continue dumb, till Hamlet could

HOR. My lord, I did ;
 But answer made it none : yet once, methought,
 It lifted up its head, and did address
 Itself to motion, like as it would speak :
 But, even then, the morning cock crew loud ;
 And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
 And vanish'd from our sight.

HAM.

'Tis very strange.

HOR. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true ;
 And we did think it writ down in our duty,
 To let you know of it.

be introduced to hear what was to remain concealed in his own breast, or to be communicated by him to some intelligent friend, like Horatio, in whom he could implicitly confide.

By what particular person therefore an apparition which exhibits itself only for the purpose of being urged to speak, was addressed, could be of no consequence.

Be it remembered likewise, that the words are not as lately pronounced on the stage, — “ Did not *you* speak to it ? ” — but “ Did you not *speak* to it ? ” — How awkward will the innovated sense appear, if attempted to be produced from the passage as it really stands in the true copies !

Did you not speak to it ?

The emphasis, therefore, should most certainly rest on — *speak*.

STEEVENS.

7 — — *the morning cock crew loud ;*] The moment of the evanescence of spirits was supposed to be limited to the crowing of the cock. This belief is mentioned so early as by Prudentius, *Cathem. Hymn. I. v. 40*. But some of his commentators prove it to be of much higher antiquity.

It is a most inimitable circumstance in Shakspeare, so to have managed this popular idea, as to make the Ghost, which has been so long obstinately silent, and of course must be dismissed by the morning, begin or rather prepare to speak, and to be interrupted, at the very critical time of the crowing of a cock.

Another poet, according to custom, would have suffered his ghost tamely to vanish, without contriving this start, which is like a start of guilt. To say nothing of the aggravation of the future suspense, occasioned by this preparation to speak, and to impart some mysterious secret. Less would have been expected, had nothing been promised. T. WARTON.

HAM. Indeed, indeed, firs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?

ALL. We do, my lord.

HAM. Arm'd, say you?

ALL. Arm'd, my lord.

HAM. From top to toe?

ALL. My lord, from head to foot.

HAM. Then saw you not
His face.

HOR. O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver up.*

HAM. What, look'd he frowningly?

HOR. A countenance more
In sorrow than in anger.

HAM. Pale, or red?

HOR. Nay, very pale.

HAM. And fix'd his eyes upon you?

HOR. Most constantly.

HAM. I would, I had been there.

HOR. It would have much amaz'd you.

HAM. Very like,
Very like: Stay'd it long?

HOR. While one with moderate haste might tell
a hundred.

MAR. BER. Longer, longer.

HOR. Not when I saw it.

* ——— wore his beaver up.] Though *beaver* properly signified that part of the helmet which was *let down*, to enable the wearer to drink, Shakspeare always uses the word as denoting that part of the helmet which, when raised up, exposed the face of the wearer: and such was the popular signification of the word in his time. In Bullokar's *English Expositor*, 8vo. 1616, *beaver* is defined thus: — "In armour it signifies that part of the helmet which may be *lifted up*, to take breath the more freely." MALONE.

HAM. His beard was grizzl'd? no?

HOR. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.⁹

HAM. I will watch to-night;
Perchance, 'twill walk again.

HOR. I warrant, it will.

HAM. If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape,
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this fight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;²
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue;
I will requite your loves: So, fare you well:
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

ALL. Our duty to your honour.

HAM. Your loves, as mine to you: Farewell.

[*Exeunt* HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.
My father's spirit in arms!³ all is not well;
I doubt some foul play: 'would, the night were
come!

Till then sit still, my foul: Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.
[*Exit.*

⁹ *A sable silver'd.*] So, in our poet's 12th sonnet:

"And sable curls, all silver'd o'er with white." MALONE.

² *Let it be tenable in your silence still;*] Thus the quartos, and rightly. The folio, 1623, reads — *treble*. STEEVENS.

³ *My father's spirit in arms!*] From what went before, I once hinted to Mr. Garrick, that these words might be spoken in this manner:

My father's spirit! in arms! all is not well; —

WHALLEY.

S C E N E III.

*A Room in Polonius' House.**Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.*

LAER. My necessaries are embark'd; farewell:
 And, sister, as the winds give benefit,
 And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
 But let me hear from you.

OPH. Do you doubt that?

LAER. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,
 Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood;
 A violet in the youth of primy nature,
 Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
 The perfume and suppliance of a minute;⁴
 No more.

OPH. No more but so?

LAER. Think it no more:
 For nature, crescent, does not grow alone

⁴ *The perfume and suppliance of a minute;*] Thus the quarto:
 the folio has it:

————— *sweet, not lasting,*
The suppliance of a minute.

It is plain that *perfume* is necessary to exemplify the idea of *sweet, not lasting*. With the word *suppliance* I am not satisfied, and yet dare hardly offer what I imagine to be right. I suspect that *solfiance*, or some such word, formed from the Italian, was then used for the act of fumigating with sweet scents. JOHNSON.

The perfume and suppliance of a minute; i. e. what is supplied to us for a minute; or, as Mr. Mason supposes, "an amusement to fill up a vacant moment, and render it agreeable." STEEVENS.

The words — *perfume and*, which are found in the quarto, 1604, were omitted in the folio. MALONE.

In thews,⁵ and bulk; but, as this temple waxes,
 The inward service of the mind and soul
 Grows wide withal. Perhaps, he loves you now;
 And now no foil, nor cautel, doth besmirch
 The virtue of his will:⁶ but, you must fear,
 His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
 For he himself is subject to his birth:⁷
 He may not, as unvalued persons do,
 Carve for himself; for on his choice depends
 The safety and the health of the whole state;⁸

⁵ In thews,] i. e. in sinews, muscular strength. So, in *King Henry IV.* Part II: "Care I for the limb, the *thewes*, the stature," &c. See Vol. XIII. p. 137, n. 7. STEEVENS.

⁶ And now no foil, nor cautel, doth besmirch
 The virtue of his will:] From *cautela*, which signifies only a prudent foresight or caution; but, passing through French hands, it lost its innocence, and now signifies fraud, deceit. And so he uses the adjective in *Julius Cæsar*:

"Swear priests and cowards, and men *cautelous*."

WARBURTON.

So, in the second part of Greene's *Art of Coneycatching*, 1592: "—— and their subtil *cautels* to amend the statute." To amend the statute, was the cant phrase for evading the law. STEEVENS.

Cautel is subtlety or deceit. Minshew in his Dictionary, 1617, defines it, "A crafty way to deceive." The word is again used by Shakspeare in *A Lover's Complaint*:

"In him a plenitude of subtle matter,

"Applied to *cautels*, all strange forms receives."

MALONE.

Virtue seems here to comprise both excellence and power, and may be explained the pure effect. JOHNSON.

The *virtue of his will* means, his virtuous intentions. *Cautel* means craft. So, Coriolanus says:

"—— be caught by *cautelous* baits and practice."

M. MASON.

⁷ For he himself &c.] This line is not in the quarto.

MALONE.

⁸ The safety and the health of the whole state;] Thus the quarto, 1604, except that it has — *this* whole state, and the second *the* is inadvertently omitted. The folio reads:

The sanctity and health of the whole state.

This is another proof of arbitrary alterations being sometimes

And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd
 Unto the voice and yielding of that body,
 Whereof he is the head: Then if he says, he loves
 you,

It fits your wisdom so far to believe it,
 As he in his particular act and place
 May give his saying deed; ⁹ which is no further,
 Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
 Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
 If with too credent ear you list his songs;
 Or lose your heart; or your chaste treasure open
 To his unmaster'd ² importunity.

Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister;
 And keep you in the rear of your affection, ³
 Out of the shot and danger of desire.

The charest maid ⁴ is prodigal enough,
 If she unmask her beauty to the moon:
 Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes:
 The canker galls the infants of the spring,
 Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd;
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
 Contagious blastments are most imminent.

made in the folio. The editor, finding the metre defective, in consequence of the article being omitted before *health*, instead of supplying it, for *safety* substituted a word of three syllables.

MALONE.

⁹ *May give his saying deed:]* So, in *Timon of Athens*: " — the deed of saying is quite out of use." Again, in *Troilus and Cressida*:
 " Speaking in deeds, and deedless in his tongue."

MALONE.

² — *unmaster'd* —] i. e. *licentious*. JOHNSON.

³ — *keep you in the rear &c.]* That is, do not advance so far as your affection would lead you. JOHNSON.

⁴ *The charest maid* —] *Chary* is cautious. So, in Greene's *Never too Late*, 1616: " Love requires not chastity, but that her soldiers be *chary*." Again, " She liveth chaste enough, that liveth *charily*." STEEVENS.

Be wary then: best safety lies in fear;
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

OPH. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep
As watchman to my heart: But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own read.⁴

LAER. O, fear me not.
I stay too long;—But here my father comes.

Enter POLONIUS.

A double blessing is a double grace;
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

POL. Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for
shame;
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,⁵

⁴ ——— recks not his own read.] That is, heeds not his own lessons. POPE.

So, in the old Morality of *Hycke Scorne*:

“ ——— I reck not a feder.”

Again, *ibidem*:

“ And of thy living, I *reed* amend thee.”

Ben Jonson uses the word *reed* in his *Cataline*:

“ So that thou could'st not move

“ Against a publick *reed*.”

Again, in Sir Tho. North's translation of Plutarch: “ ——— Dispatch, I *read* you, for your enterprize is betray'd.” Again, the old proverb, in the *Two angry Women of Abingdon*, 1599:

“ Take heed, is a good *reed*.”

i. e. good counsel, good advice. STEEVENS.

So, Sternhold, *Psalms* i:

“ ——— that hath not lent

“ To wicked *rede* his ear.” BLACKSTONE.

⁵ ——— *The shoulder of your sail*,] This is a common sea phrase. STEEVENS.

And you are staid for: There, — my blessing with
 you; [*Laying his hand on LAERTES' head.*
 And these few precepts in thy memory
 Look thou character.⁶ Give thy thoughts no tongue,
 Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
 Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
 The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
 Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel;⁷
 But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
 Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd, comrade.⁸ Beware

⁶ *And these few precepts in thy memory*
Look thou character.] i. e. write; strongly infix. The same
 phrase is again used by our author in his 122d Sonnet:

“ — thy tables are within my brain

“ Full character'd with lasting memory.”

Again, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

“ — I do conjure thee,

“ Who art the table wherein all my thoughts

“ Are visibly character'd and engrav'd.” MALONE.

⁷ *Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel;*] The old copies
 read—with *hoops* of steel. I have no doubt that this was a corrup-
 tion in the original quarto of 1604, arising, like many others,
 from similitude of sounds. The emendation, which was made by
 Mr. Pope, and adopted by three subsequent editors, is strongly
 supported by the word *grapple*. See *Minsheu's Dictionary*, 1617:
 “ To hook or grapple, viz. to grapple and to board a ship.”

A *grapple* is an instrument with several *hooks* to lay hold of a ship,
 in order to board it.

This correction is also justified by our poet's 137th Sonnet;

“ Why of eyes' falsehood hast thou forged *hooks*,

“ Whereto the judgement of my heart is ty'd?”

It may be also observed, that *hooks* are sometimes made of steel,
 but *hoops* never.

We have, however, in *King Henry IV.* P. II:

“ A *hoop* of gold to bind thy brothers in.”

The former part of the phrase occurs also in *Macbeth*:

“ *Grapples*, you to the heart and love of us.” STEEVENS.

⁸ *But do not dull thy palm with entertainment*

Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade.] The literal sense is,

Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,
 Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee.
 Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice:
 Take each man's censure,⁹ but reserve thy judge-
 ment.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
 But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy:
 For the apparel oft proclaims the man;
 And they in France, of the best rank and station,
 Are most select and generous, chief in that.²

Do not make thy palm callous by shaking every man by the hand. The figurative meaning may be, Do not by promiscuous conversation make thy mind insensible to the difference of characters. JOHNSON.

⁹ ——— each man's censure,] Censure is opinion. So, in *King Henry VI. P. II.*:

“The king is old enough to give his censure.” STEEVENS.

² *Are most select and generous, chief in that.*] I think the whole design of the precept shows we should read:

Are most select, and generous chief, in that.

Chief may be an adjective used adverbially, a practice common to our author: chiefly generous. Yet it must be owned that the punctuation recommended is very stiff and harsh.

I would, however, more willingly read:

*And they in France, of the best rank and station,
 Select and generous, are most choice in that.*

Let the reader, who can discover the slightest approach towards sense, harmony, or metre, in the original line,—

Are of a most select and generous chief, in that,—

adhere to the old copies. STEEVENS.

The genuine meaning of the passage requires us to point the line thus:

“Are most select and generous, chief in that.”

i. e. the nobility of France are select and generous above all other nations and chiefly in the point of apparel; the richness and elegance of their dress. RITSON.

Are of a most select and generous chief, in that.] Thus the quarto, 1604, and the folio, except that in that copy the word *chief* is spelt *cheff*. The substantive *chief*, which signifies in heraldry the upper part of the shield, appears to have been in common use in Shakespeare's time, being found in Minsheu's Dictionary, 1617. He defines it thus: “*Est superior et scuti nobilior pars; tertiam partem*

Neither a borrower, nor a lender be :
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend ;
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.³
 This above all,—To thine ownself be true ;
 And it must follow, as the night the day,⁴
 Thou canst not then be false to any man.
 Farewell ; my blessing season this in thee !⁵

ejus obtinet ; ante Christi adventum dabatur in maximi honoris signum ; senatoribus & honoratis viris." B. Jonson has used the word in his *Poetaster*.

The meaning then seems to be, *They in France approve themselves of a most select and generous escutcheon by their dress.* Generous is used with the signification of *generosus*. So, in *Othello* : "The generous islanders," &c.

Chief, however, may have been used as a substantive, for *note* or *estimation*, without any allusion to heraldry, though the word was perhaps originally *heraldick*. So, in Bacon's *Colours of Good and Evil*, 16mo. 1597 : "In the warmer climates the people are generally more wise, but in the northern climates the wits of *chief* are greater."

If *chief* in this sense had not been familiarly understood, the editor of the folio must have considered the line as unintelligible, and would have probably omitted the words—*of a* in the beginning of it, or attempted some other correction. That not having been done, I have adhered to the old copies.

Our poet from various passages in his works, appears to have been accurately acquainted with all the terms of heraldry.

MALONE.

Of chief, in the passage quoted from Bacon, is, I believe, a bald translation of the old French phrase—*de chef*, whatever, in the present instance, might be its intended meaning. STEEVENS.

³ — *of husbandry.*] i. e. of thrift ; economical prudence. See Vol. XI. p. 82, n. 4. MALONE.

⁴ *And it must follow, as the night the day,*] So, in the 145th Sonnet of Shakspeare :

"That follow'd it as gentle day

"Doth follow night." STEEVENS.

⁵ — *my blessing season this in thee !*] *Season*, for *infuse*.

WARBURTON.

It is more than to *infuse*, it is to infix it in such a manner as that it never may wear out. JOHNSON.

LAER. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

POL. The time invites you; ⁵ go, your servants
tend. ⁶

LAER. Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well
What I have said to you.

OPH. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it. ⁷

LAER. Farewell. [Exit LAERTES.]

POL. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

OPH. So please you, something touching the lord
Hamlet.

POL. Marry, well bethought:

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and boun-
teous:

If it be so, (as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution,) I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly,

So, in the mock tragedy represented before the king:

" — who in want a hollow friend doth try,
" Directly seasons him his enemy." STEEVENS.

⁵ *The time invites you;*] So, in *Macbeth*:

" I go, and it is done, the bell invites me." STEEVENS.

Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads—The time *invests* you: which Mr. Theobald preferred, supposing that it meant, "the time besieges, presses upon you on every side." But to *invest*, in Shakspeare's time, only signified, to clothe, or give possession.

MALONE.

⁶ — *your servants tend.*] i. e. your servants are waiting for you. JOHNSON.

⁷ — *yourself shall keep the key of it.*] The meaning is, that your counsels are as sure of remaining locked up in my memory, as if yourself carried the key of it. So, in *Northward Ho*, by Decker and Webster, 1607: "You shall close it up like a treasure of your own, and yourself shall keep the key of it."

STEEVENS.

As it behoves my daughter, and your honour:
What is between you? give me up the truth.

OPH. He hath, my lord, of late made many
tenders
Of his affection to me.

POL. Affection? puh! you speak like a green
girl,
Unfitted in such perilous circumstance.⁸

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

OPH. I do not know, my lord, what I should
think.

POL. Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a
baby;

That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more
dearly;

Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Wronging it thus,) you'll tender me a fool.⁹

⁸ Unfitted in such perilous circumstance.] Unfitted for untried. Untried signifies either not tempted, or not refined; unfitted signifies the latter only, though the sense requires the former.

WARBURTON.

It means, I believe, one who has not sufficiently considered, or thoroughly sifted such matters. M. MASON.

I do not think that the sense requires us to understand *untried*. "Unfitted in" &c, means, I think, one who has not nicely *canvassed* and examined the peril of her situation. MALONE.

⁹ ——— Tender yourself more dearly;

Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,

Wronging it thus,) you'll tender me a fool] The parenthesis is closed at the wrong place; and we must have likewise a slight correction in the last verse. [Wringing it &c.] Polonius is racking and playing on the word *tender*, till he thinks proper to correct himself for the licence; and then he would say — not farther to crack the wind of the phrase, by *twisting* it and *contorting* it, as I have done.

WARBURTON.

I believe the word *wronging* has reference, not to the phrase, but to Ophelia; if you go on *wronging it thus*, that is, if you con-

OPH. My lord, he hath importun'd me with love,
In honourable fashion.

POL. Ay, fashion you may call it;² go to, go to.

OPH. And hath given countenance to his speech,
my lord.

With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

POL. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks.³ I do
know,

When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul

tique to go on thus wrong. This is a mode of speaking perhaps not very grammatical, but very common; nor have the best writers refused it.

"To sinner it or faint it,"

is in Pope. And Rowe,

"—— Thus to coy it,

"With one who knows you too."

The folio has it—*Roaming* it thus. That is, *letting yourself loose to such improper liberty.* But *wronging* seems to be more proper.

JOHNSON.

"See you do not coy it," is in Massinger's *New Way to pay old Debts.* STEEVENS.

I have followed the punctuation of the first quarto, 1604, where the parenthesis is extended to the word *thus*, to which word the context in my apprehension clearly shews it should be carried.

"Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase, playing upon it, and abusing it thus,)" &c. So, in *The Rape of Lucrece*:

"To *wrong* the wronger, till he render right."

The quarto, by the mistake of the compositor, reads—*Wrong* it thus. The correction was made by Mr. Pope.

——Tender yourself more dearly;] To *tender* is to regard with affection. So in *King Richard II*:

"—— And so betide me,

"As well I tender you and all of yours."

Again, in *The Maydes Metamorphosis*, by Lyly, 1601:

"—— if you account us for the same

"That tender thee, and love Apollo's name." MALONE.

² —— fashion you may call it;] She uses *fashion* for *manner*, and he for a *transient practice*. JOHNSON.

³ —— springes to catch woodcocks.] A proverbial saying, "Every woman has a *springe* to catch a woodcock." STEEVENS.

Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,⁴
 Giving more light than heat,—extinct in both,
 Even in their promise, as it is a making,—
 You must not take for fire. From this time,
 Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence;
 Set your entreatments⁵ at a higher rate,
 Than a command to parley. For lord Hamlet,
 Believe so much in him, That he is young;
 And with a larger tether⁶ may he walk,
 Than may be given you: In few, Ophelia,
 Do not believe his vows: for they are brokers⁷
 Not of that die which their investments show,
 But mere implorators of unholy suits,
 Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,⁸

⁴ — *these blazes, daughter,*] Some epithet to *blazes* was probably omitted, by the carelessness of the transcriber or compositor, in the first quarto, in consequence of which the metre is defective. MALONE.

⁵ *Set your entreatments* —] *Entreatments* here mean *company, conversation*, from the French *entretien*. JOHNSON.

Entreatments, I rather think, means the objects of *entreaty*; the favours for which lovers sue. In the next scene we have a word of a similar formation:

“As if it some *impartment* did desire,” &c. MALONE.

⁶ — *larger tether* —] A string to tie horses. POPE.

Tether is that string by which an animal, set to graze in grounds uninclosed, is confined within the proper limits. JOHNSON.

So, in Greene's *Card of Fancy*, 1601:—“To tye the ape and the bear in one *tedder*.” *Tether* is a string by which any animal is fastened, whether for the sake of feeding or the air.

STEEVENS.

⁷ *Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers* —] A *broker* in old English meant a *bawd* or *pimp*. See the Glossary to Gawin Douglas's translation of *Virgil*. So, in *King John*:

“This *bawd*, this *broker*,” &c.

See also Vol. XVI. p. 450, n. 9. In our author's *Lover's Complaint* we again meet with the same expression, applied in the same manner:

“Know, *vows* are ever *brokers* to defiling.” MALONE.

⁸ *Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,*] On which the editor,

The better to beguile. This is for all,—

Mr. Theobald, remarks, *Though all the editors have swallowed this reading implicitly, it is certainly corrupt; and I have been surprized how men of genius and learning could let it pass without some suspicion. What idea can we frame to ourselves of a breathing bond, or of its being sanctified and pious, &c.* But he was too hasty in framing ideas before he understood those already framed by the poet, and expressed in very plain words. Do not believe (says Polonius to his daughter) Hamlet's amorous vows made *to you*; which pretend religion in them (*the better to beguile*) like those sanctified and pious vows [*or bonds*] made *to heaven*. And why should not this pass without suspicion? **WARBURTON.**

Theobald for *bonds* substitutes *bawds*. **JOHNSON.**

Notwithstanding Warburton's elaborate explanation of this passage, I have not the least doubt but Theobald is right, and that we ought to read *bawds* instead of *bonds*. Indeed the present reading is little better than nonsense.

Polonius had called Hamlet's vows, *brokers*, but two lines before, a synonymous word to *bawds*, and the very title that Shakspeare gives to Pandarus, in his *Troilus and Cressida*. The words *implicators of unholy suits*, are an exact description of a *bawd*; and all such of them as are crafty in their trade, put on the appearance of sanctity, and are “not of that die which their investments shew.”

M. MASON.

The old reading is undoubtedly the true one. Do not, says Polonius, believe his vows, for they are merely uttered for the purpose of persuading you to yield to a criminal passion, though they appear only the genuine effusions of a pure and lawful affection, and assume the semblance of those sacred engagements entered into at the altar of wedlock. The *bonds* here in our poet's thoughts were *bonds of love*. So, in his 142d Sonnet:

“ ————— those lips of thine,
“ That have profan'd their scarlet ornaments,
“ And seal'd false *bonds of love*, as oft as mine.”

Again, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

“ O, ten times faster Venus pigeons fly,
“ To seal *love's bonds* new made, than they are wont
“ To keep obliged faith unforfeited.”

“ Sanctified and pious bonds,” are the *true bonds of love*, or, as our poet has elsewhere expressed it,

“ A contract and *eternal bond of love*.”

Dr. Warburton certainly misunderstood this passage; and when he triumphantly asks “may not this pass without suspicion?” if he means his own comment, the answer is, because it is not perfectly accurate. **MALONE.**

I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
Have you so slander any moment's leisure,⁹
As to give words or talk with the lord Hamlet.
Look to't, I charge you; come your ways.

OPH. I shall obey, my lord. [Exeunt.]

S C E N E IV.

The Platform.

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.

HAM. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

HOR. It is a nipping and an eager air.²

HAM. What hour now?

HOR. I think, it lacks of twelve.

MAR. No, it is struck.

HOR. Indeed? I heard it not; it then draws near
the season,

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off,
within.]

What does this mean, my lord?

HAM. The king doth wake to-night, and takes
his rouse,³

⁹ *I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
Have you so slander any moment's leisure,*] Polonius says, in plain
terms, that is, not in language less elevated or embellished than be-
fore but in terms that cannot be misunderstood: *I would not have you
so disgrace your most idle moments, as not to find better employment for
them than lord Hamlet's conversation.* JOHNSON.

² *— an eager air.*] That is, a sharp air, *aigre*, Fr. So, in a
subsequent scene:

"And curd, like eager droppings into milk." MALONE.

³ *— takes his rouse,*] A rouse is a large dose of liquor, a de-
bauch. So, in *Othello*: "*— they have given me a rouse already.*"

Keeps wassel,⁴ and the swaggering up-spring⁵ reels ;
 And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
 The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
 The triumph of his pledge.

HOR.

Is it a custom?

HAM. Ay, marry, is't:

But to my mind,—though I am native here,
 And to the manner born,—it is a custom
 More honour'd in the breach, than the observance.
 This heavy-headed revel, east and west,⁶

It should seem from the following passage in Decker's *Gul's Horn-book*, 1609, that the word *rouse* was of Danish extraction: "Teach me, thou soveraigne skinker, how to take the German's upsy freeze, the *Danish rousa*, the Switzer's floop of rhenish," &c.

STEEVENS.

⁴ *Keeps wassel,*] See Vol. XI. p. 78, n. 4. Again, in *The Hog hath lost his Pearl*, 1614:

"By Croesus name and by his castle,

"Where winter nights he keepeth wassel."

i. e. devotes his nights to jollity. STEEVENS.

⁵ — the swaggering up-spring —] The blustering upstart.

JOHNSON.

It appears from the following passage in *Alphonfus Emperor of Germany*, by Chapman, that the *up-spring* was a German dance:

"We Germans have no changes in our dances;

"An *almain* and an *up-spring*, that is all."

Spring was anciently the name of a tune, so in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Prophetess*:

"—— we will meet him,

"And strike him such new *springs*—."

This word is used by G. Douglas in his translation of Virgil, and, I think, by Chaucer. Again, in an old Scots proverb: "Another would play a *spring*, ere you tune your pipes." STEEVENS.

⁶ *This heavy-headed revel, east and west,*] *This heavy-headed revel makes us traduced east and west, and taxed of other nations.*

JOHNSON.

By *east and west*, as Mr. Edwards has observed, is meant, throughout the world; *from one end of it to the other*.—This and the following twenty-one lines have been restored from the quarto.

MALONE.

Makes us traduc'd, and tax'd of other nations:
 They clepe us, drunkards,⁷ and with swinish phrase
 Soil our addition; and, indeed it takes
 From our achievements, though perform'd at
 height,
 The pith and marrow of our attribute.⁸
 So, oft it chances in particular men,
 That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,
 As, in their birth, (wherein they are not guilty,
 Since nature cannot choose his origin,)⁹

⁷ *They clepe us, drunkards,]* And well our Englishmen might;
 for in Q. Elizabeth's time there was a *Dane* in London, of whom
 the following mention is made in a collection of characters entitled
Looke to it, for Ile stab ye, no date:

"You that will drinke *Keynaldo* unto deth,
 "The *Dane* that would carowse out of his boote."

Mr. M. Mason adds, that "it appears from one of Howell's
 letters, dated at Hamburgh in the year 1632, that the then King
 of Denmark had not degenerated from his jovial predecessor.—In
 his account of an entertainment given by his majesty to the Earl of
 Leicester, he tells us, that the king, after beginning thirty-five
 toasts, was carried away in his chair, and that all the officers of the
 court were drunk." STEEVENS.

See also the *Nugæ Antiquæ*, Vol. II. p. 133, for the scene of
 drunkenness introduced into the court of James I. by the King of
 Denmark, in 1606. REED.

⁸ *The pith and marrow of our attribute.]* The best and most
 valuable part of the praise that would be otherwise attributed to us.
 STEEVENS.

⁹ *That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,
 As, in their birth, (wherein they are not guilty,
 Since nature cannot choose his origin,]* We have the same senti-
 ment in *The Rape of Lucrece*:

"For marks descried in men's nativity
 "Are nature's fault, not their own infamy."

Mr. Theobald, without necessity, altered *mole* to *mould*. The
 reading of the old copies is fully supported by a passage in *King
 John*:

"Patch'd with foul moles, and eye-offending marks."
 MALONE.

By the o'er-growth of some complexion,²
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason;
 Or by some habit, that too much o'er-leavens
 The form of plaufive manners;³—that these men,—
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect;
 Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,⁴—
 Their virtues else (be they as pure as grace,
 As infinite as man may undergo,)⁵

² ——— complexion,] i. e. humour; as sanguine, melancholy, phlegmatick, &c. WARBURTON.

The quarto, 1604, for *the* has *their*; as a few lines lower it has *his* virtues, instead of *their* virtues. The correction was made by Mr. Theobald. MALONE.

³ ——— that too much o'er-leavens

The form of plaufive manners;] That intermingles too much with their manners; infects and corrupts them. See Vol. XIX. p. 123, n. 9. *Plaufive* in our poet's age signified gracious, pleasing, popular. So, in *All's well that ends well*:

“ ——— his *plaufive* words

“ He scatter'd not in ears, but grafted them,

“ To grow there, and to bear.”

Plaufible, in which sense *plaufive* is here used, is defined by Cawdrey in his *Alphabetical Table*, &c. 1604, “ *Pleasing*, or received joyfully and willingly.” MALONE.

⁴ ——— fortune's star,] The word *star* in the text signifies a *scar* of that appearance. It is a term of *farricry*: the *white star* or mark so common on the forehead of a dark coloured horse, is usually produced by making a *scar* on the place. RITON.

——— fortune's star,] Some accidental blemish, the consequence of the overgrowth of some complexion or humour allotted to us by fortune at our birth, or some vicious habit accidentally acquired afterwards.

Theobald, plausibly enough, would read—fortune's *scar*. The emendation may be supported by a passage in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“ The *scars* upon your honour therefore he

“ Does pity as constrained *blemishes*,

“ Not as deserv'd.” MALONE.

⁵ *As infinite as man may undergo,]* As large as can be accumulated upon man. JOHNSON.

So, in *Measure for Measure*:

“ To undergo such ample grace and honour,—.”

STEEVENS.

Shall in the general censure take corruption
 From that particular fault: The dram of base
 Doth all the noble substance often dout,
 To his own scandal.⁶

⁶ ———— *The dram of base*

Doth all the noble substance often dout,
To his own scandal.] I once proposed to read—*Doth all the noble substance* (i. e. the sum of good qualities) *oft do out*. We should now say,—*To its own scandal*; but *his* and *its* are perpetually confounded in the old copies.

As I understand the passage, there is little difficulty in it. This is one of the phrases which at present are neither employed in writing, nor perhaps are reconcileable to propriety of language.

To do a thing out, is to *extinguish it*, or to *efface* or *obliterate any thing painted or written*.

In the first of these significations it is used by Drayton, in the 5th Canto of his *Barons' Wars*:

“ Was ta'en in battle, and his eyes *out-done*.”

My conjecture—*do out*, instead of *doubt*, might have received support from the pronunciation of this verb in Warwickshire, where they always say—“ *dout* the candle,”—“ *dout* the fire; i. e. put out or extinguish them. The forfex by which a candle is extinguished is also there called—a *douter*.

Dout, however, is a word formed by the coalescence of two others, (*do* and *out*) like *don* for *do on*, *doff* for *do off*, both of which are used by Shakspeare.

The word in question (and with the same blunder in spelling) has already occurred in the ancient copies of *King Henry V*:

“ ———— make incision in their hides,

“ That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,

“ And *doubt* them with superfluous courage:”

i. e. *put* or *do* them *out*. I therefore now think we should read:

Doth all the noble substance often *dout*, &c.

for surely it is needless to say—

———*the noble substance* of *worth* *dout*,

because the idea of *worth* is comprehended in the epithet—*noble*.

N. B. The improvement which my former note on this passage has received, I owed, about four years ago, to the late Rev. Henry Homer, a native of Warwickshire. But as Mr. Malone appears to have been furnished with almost the same intelligence, I shall not suppress his mode of communicating it, as he may fairly plead priority in having laid it before the publick. This is the sole cause why our readers are here presented with two annotations, of

Enter Ghost.

HOR.

Look, my lord, it comes !

almost similar tendency, on the same subject: for unwilling as I am to withhold justice from a dead friend, I should with equal reluctance defraud a living critick of his due. STEEVENS.

The quarto, where alone this passage is found, exhibits it thus:

—————*The dram of eale*
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt,
To his own scandal.

To *dout*, as I have already observed in a note on *King Henry V.* Vol. XIII. p. 421, n. 2, signified in Shakspeare's time, and yet signifies in Devonshire and other western counties, to *do out*, to efface, to extinguish. Thus they say, "*dout* the candle,"—" *dout* the fire." &c. It is exactly formed in the same manner as to *don* (or *do on*,) which occurs so often in the writings of our poet and his contemporaries.

I have no doubt that the corruption of the text arose in the following manner. *Dout*, which I have now printed in the text, having been written by the mistake of the transcriber, *doubt*, and the word *worth* having been inadvertently omitted, the line, in the copy that went to the press, stood,

Doth all the noble substance of doubt,——.

The editor or printer of the quarto copy, finding the line too short, and thinking *doubt* must want an article, inserted it, without attending to the context; and instead of correcting the erroneous, and supplying the true word, printed—

Doth all the noble substance of a doubt, &c.

The very same error has happened in *King Henry V.*:

"That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,

"And *doubt* them with superfluous courage:"

where *doubt* is again printed instead of *dout*.

That *worth* (which was supplied first by Mr. Theobald) was the word omitted originally in the hurry of transcription, may be fairly collected from a passage in *Cymbeline*, which fully justifies the correction made:

"—————Is she with Posthumus?

"From whose so many weights of *baseness* cannot

"A *dram* of *worth* be drawn."

This passage also adds support to the correction of the word *eale* in the first of these lines, which was likewise made by Mr. Theo-

HAM. Angels and ministers of grace defend us ! —

bald.—*Base* is used substantively for *baseness*: a practice not uncommon in Shakspeare. So, in *Measure for Measure*:

“ Say what thou canst, my *false* outweighs your *true*.”

Shakspeare, however, might have written—The dram of *ill*. This is nearer the corrupted word *eale*, but the passage in *Cymbeline* is in favour of the other emendation.

The meaning of the passage thus corrected is, The smallest particle of vice so blemishes the whole mass of virtue, as to erase from the minds of mankind the recollection of the numerous good qualities possessed by him who is thus blemished by a single stain, and taints his general character.

To his own scandal, means, *so as to reduce the whole mass of worth to its own vicious and unsightly appearance; to translate his virtue to the likeness of vice.*

His for its, is so common in Shakspeare, that every play furnishes us with examples. So, in a subsequent scene in this play:—“ than the force of honesty can translate beauty into *his* likeness.”

Again, in *Timon of Athens*:

“ When every feather flicks in *his* own wing,——.”

Again, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

“ Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,

“ To take from thence all error with *his* might.”

Again, in *King Richard II*:

“ That it may shew me what a face I have,

“ Since it is bankrupt of *his* majesty.”

So, in *Grim, the Collier of Croydon*:

“ Contented life, that gives the heart *his* ease,——.”

We meet with a sentiment somewhat similar to that before us, in *King Henry IV. P. I*:

“ —— oftentimes it doth present harsh rage,

“ Defect of manners, want of government,

“ Pride, haughtiness, opinion, and disdain;

“ The *least* of which, baunting a nobleman,

“ Loseth men's hearts, and leaves behind a *stain*

“ Upon the beauty of all parts besides,

“ Beguiling them of commendation.” MALONE.

[*Angels and ministers of grace defend us! &c.*] Hamlet's speech to the apparition of his father seems to consist of three parts. When first he sees the spectre, he fortifies himself with an invocation:

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

As the spectre approaches, he deliberates with himself, and determines, that whatever it be he will venture to address it.

Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,⁸
 Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from
 hell,
 Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
 Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,⁹

*Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,
 Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,
 Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
 Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
 That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee, &c.*

This he says while his father is advancing; he then, as he had determined, speaks to him, and calls him—*Hamlet, King, Father, Royal Dane: O! answer me.* JOHNSON.

⁸ *Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd, &c.] So, in Aco-
 lastus his After-wit, 1600:*

“Art thou a god, a man, or else a ghost?
 “Com'st thou from heaven, where blifs and solace dwell?
 “Or from the airie cold-engendring coast?
 “Or from the darksome dungeon-hold of hell?”

The first known edition of this play is in 1604.

The same question occurs also in the MS. known by the title of *William and the Werwolf*, in the Library of King's College, Cambridge:

“Whether thou be a gode gost in goddis name that
 speakest,
 “Or any foul fiend fourmed in this wise,
 “And if we schul of the hent harme or gode.” p. 36.

Again, in Barnaby Googe's *Fourth Eglog*:

“What soever thou art y^e thus dost com,
 “Ghoost, bagge, or fende of hell,
 “I the comaunde by hym that lyves
 “Thy name and case to tell.” STEEVENS.

⁹ — questionable shape,] By *questionable* is meant provoking question. HANMER.

So, in *Macbeth*:

“Live you, or are you aught
 “That man may question?” JOHNSON.

Questionable, I believe, means only propitious to conversation, easy and willing to be conversed with. So, in *As you like it*: “An unquestionable spirit, which you have not.” Unquestionable in this last instance certainly signifies unwilling to be talked with.

STEEVENS.

That I will speak to thee; I'll call thee, Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me:
Let me not burst in ignorance! but tell,
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements! ² why the sepulchre,

Questionable perhaps only means *capable of being conversed with*.
To question, certainly in our author's time signified *to converse*. So,
in his *Rape of Lucrece*, 1594:

"For after supper long he *questioned*
"With modest Lucrece—."

Again, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

"Out of our *question* wipe him.

See also Vol. XX. p. 532, n. 5. MALONE.

² ————— tell,

*Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements!* | Hamlet, amazed at an apparition, which, though in all ages credited, has in all ages been considered as the most wonderful and most dreadful operation of supernatural agency, enquires of the spectre, in the most emphatick terms, why he breaks the order of nature, by returning from the dead; this he asks in a very confused circumlocution, confounding in his fright the soul and body. Why, says he, have *thy bones*, which with due ceremonies have been entombed *in death*, in the common state of departed mortals, *burst* the folds in which they were embalmed? Why has the tomb, in which we saw thee quietly laid, opened his mouth, that mouth which, by its weight and stability, seemed closed for ever? The whole sentence is this: *Why dost thou appear, whom we know to be dead?* JOHNSON.

By the expression *hearsed in death* is meant, shut up and secured with all those precautions which are usually practised in preparing dead bodies for sepulture, such as the winding-sheet, shroud, coffin, &c. perhaps embalming into the bargain. So that *death* is here used, by a metonymy of the antecedent for the consequents, for the rites of death, such as are generally esteemed due, and practised with regard to dead bodies. Consequently, I understand by *cerements*, the waxed winding sheet or winding-sheets, in which the corpse was enclosed and sown up, in order to preserve it the longer from external impressions from the humidity of the sepulchre, as embalming was intended to preserve it from internal corruption.

HEATH.

By hearsed in death, the poet seems to mean, *reposed and confined*

Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd,³
 Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,
 To cast thee up again! What may this mean,
 That thou, dead corse, again, in cômplete steel,⁴
 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
 Making night hideous; and we fools of nature,⁵
 So horridly to shake our disposition,⁶
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
 Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

HOR. It beckons you to go away with it,
 As if it some impartment did desire
 To you alone.

MAR. Look, with what courteous action

in the place of the dead. In his *Rape of Lucrece* he has again used this uncommon participle in nearly the same sense:

“Thy sea within a puddle's womb is *hearsed*,

“And not the puddle in thy sea dispersed.” MALONE.

³ ——— quietly in-urn'd,] The quartos read—*interr'd*.

STEEVENS.

⁴ *That thou, dead corse, again, in cômplete steel,*] It is probable that Shakspeare introduced his ghost in armour, that it might appear more solemn by such a discrimination from the other characters; though it was really the custom of the Danish kings to be buried in that manner. Vide *Olaus Wormius*, cap. vii:

“*Struem regi nec vestibus, nec odoribus cumulant, sua cuique arma, quorundam igni & equus adjicitur.*”

“—— sed postquam magnanimus ille Danorum rex collem sibi magnitudinis conspicuæ extruxisset, (cui post obitum regio diademate exornatum, *armis indutum*, inferendum esset cadaver,” &c.

STEEVENS.

⁵ ——— *we fools of nature,*] The expression is fine, as intimating we were only kept (as formerly, fools in a great family,) to make sport for nature, who lay hid only to mock and laugh at us, for our vain searches into her mysteries. WARBURTON.

—— *we fools of nature* —] i. e. making us, who are the sport of nature, whose mysterious operations are beyond the reaches of our souls, &c. So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

“O, I am *fortune's fool*.” MALONE.

⁶ ——— *to shake our disposition.*] *Disposition for frame.*

WARBURTON.

It waves you to a more removed ground :⁷
But do not go with it.

HOR. No, by no means.

HAM. It will not speak; then I will follow it.

HOR. Do not, my lord.

HAM. Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee;⁸
And, for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth again;—I'll follow it.

HOR. What, if it tempt you toward the flood,
my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff,
That beetles o'er his base⁹ into the sea?
And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,^a

⁷ — a more removed ground :] i. e. remote. So, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* :

“ From Athens is her house remov'd seven leagues.”
The first folio reads—remote. STEEVENS.

⁸ — pin's fee;] The value of a pin. JOHNSON.

⁹ That beetles o'er his base—] So, in Sidney's *Arcadia*, B. I:
“ Hills lifted up their beetle brows, as if they would overlook the pleasantness of their under prospect.” STEEVENS.

That beetles o'er his base—] That hangs o'er his base, like what is called a beetle-brow. This verb is, I believe, of our author's coinage. MALONE.

^a — deprive your sovereignty of reason,] i. e. your ruling power of reason. When poets wish to invest any quality or virtue with uncommon splendor, they do it by some allusion to regal eminence. Thus, among the excellencies of Banquo's character, our author distinguishes “ his royalty of nature,” i. e. his natural superiority over others, his independent dignity of mind. I have selected this instance to explain the former, because I am told that “ royalty of nature” has been idly supposed to bear some allusion to Banquo's distant prospect of the crown.

And draw you into madness? think of it;
 The very place³ puts toys of desperation,⁴
 Without more motive, into every brain,
 That looks so many fathoms to the sea,
 And hears it roar beneath.

HAM. It waves me still:—
 Go on, I'll follow thee.

MAR. You shall not go, my lord.

HAM. Hold off your hands.

HOR. Be rul'd, you shall not go.

HAM. My fate cries out,
 And makes each petty artery in this body
 As hardy as the Némean lion's nerve.⁵—

[Ghost beckons.

To *deprive* your sovereignty of reason, therefore does not signify to deprive your princely mind of rational powers, but, to take away from you the command of reason, by which man is governed.

Dr. Warburton would read *deprave*; but several proofs are given in a note to *King Lear*, Vol. XX. p. 292, n. 7, of Shakspeare's use of the word *deprive*, which is the true reading. STEEVENS.

I believe, *deprive* in this place signifies simply to *take away*.

JOHNSON.

³ *The very place—*] The four following lines added from the first edition. POPE.

⁴ — puts toys of desperation,] Toys, for whims.

WARBURTON.

⁵ *As hardy as the Némean lion's nerve.*] Shakspeare has again accented the word *Nemean* in this manner, in *Love's Labour's Lost*:

“ Thus dost thou hear the Némean lion roar.”

Spenser, however, wrote *Neméan*, *Faery Queene*, Book V. c. i:

“ Into the great Neméan lion's grove.”

Our poet's conforming in this instance to Latin prosody was certainly accidental, for he and almost all the poets of his time disregarded the quantity of Latin names. So, in *Lochrine*, 1595, (though undoubtedly the production of a scholar,) we have *Amphion* instead of *Amphion*, &c. See also p 36, n. 6. MALONE.

The true quantity of this word was rendered obvious to Shakspeare by Twine's translation of part of the *Æneid*, and Golding's version of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. STEEVENS.

Still am I call'd;—unhand me, gentlemen;—

[*Breaking from them.*

By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets
me:⁶—

I say, away:—Go on,—I'll follow thee.

[*Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET.*

HOR. He waxes desperate with imagination.

MAR. Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

HOR. Have after:—To what issue will this come?

MAR. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

HOR. Heaven will direct it.⁷

MAR. Nay, let's follow him.

[*Exeunt.*

⁶ ——— *that lets me:*] To *let* among our old authors signifies to prevent, to hinder. It is still a word current in the law, and to be found in almost all leases. STEEVENS.

So, in *No Wit like a Woman's*, a comedy by Middleton, 1657:

“That *lets* her not to be your daughter now.”

MALONE.

⁷ *Heaven will direct it.*] Perhaps it may be more apposite to read “Heaven will *dete*ct it.” FARMER.

Marcellus answers Horatio's question, “To what issue will this come?” and Horatio also answers it himself with a pious resignation, “Heaven will *dire*ct it.” BLACKSTONE.

S C E N E V.

A more remote Part of the Platform.

Re-enter Ghost and HAMLET.

HAM. Whither wilt thou lead me? speak, I'll go
no further.

GHOST. Mark me.

HAM. I will.

GHOST. My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

HAM. Alas, poor ghost!

GHOST. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

HAM. Speak, I am bound to hear.

GHOST. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt
hear.

HAM. What?

GHOST. I am thy father's spirit;
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night;
And, for the day, confin'd to fast in fires,⁸

⁸ *Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night;*

And, for the day, confin'd to fast in fires,] Chaucer has a similar passage with regard to the punishments of hell, *Parson's Tale*, p. 193, Mr. Urry's edition: "And moreover the misere of hell, shall be in defaute of mete and drinke." SMITH.

Nash, in his *Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Devil*, 1595, has the same idea: "Whether it be a place of horror, stench and darkness, where men see meat, but can get none, and are ever

Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,
Are burnt and purg'd away.⁹ But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,

thirsty," &c. Before I had read the *Persones Tale* of Chaucer, I supposed that the meant rather to drop a stroke of satire on sacerdotal luxury, than to give a serious account of the place of future torment. Chaucer, however, is as grave as Shakspeare. So, likewise at the conclusion of an ancient pamphlet called *The Wyll of the Devyll*, bl. l. no date:

"Thou shalt lye in frost and fire

"With sicknesse and hunger;" &c.

Again, in *Love's Labour's Lost*:

"—— love's fasting pain." STEEVENS.

This passages requires no amendment. As spirits were supposed to feel the same desires and appetites that they had on earth, to fast might be considered as one of the punishments inflicted on the wicked.

M. MASON.

⁹ *Are burnt and purg'd away.*] Gawin Douglas really changes the Platonic hell into the "punition of saulis in purgatory:" and it is observable, that when the ghost informs Hamlet of his doom there,

"Till the foul crimes done in his days of nature

"Are burnt and purg'd away, —"

The expression is very similar to the Bishop's. I will give you his version as concisely as I can: "It is a nedeful thyng to suffer panis and torment; — Sum in the wyndis, sum under the watter, and in the fire uthir sum: thus the mony vices —

"Contrakkit in the corporis be done away

"And purgit." — *Sixte Book of Eneados*, fol. p. 191.

FARMER.

Shakspeare might have found this expression in *The Hystorie of Hamblet*, bl. l. F. 2. edit. 1608: "He set fire in the foure corners of the hal, in such sort, that of all that were as then therein not one escaped away, but were forced to purge their sinnes by fire."

MALONE.

Shakspeare talks more like a Papist, than a Platonist; but the language of Bishop Douglas is that of a good Protestant:

"Thus the mony vices

"Contrakkit in the corporis be done away

"And purgit."

These are the very words of our Liturgy, in the commendatory prayer for a sick person at the point of departure, in the office for the visitation of the sick; — "Whatsoever defilements it may have contracted — being purged and done away." WHALLEY.

I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul; freeze thy young blood;
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their
spheres;²

Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine:³

But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood: — Lift, lift, O lift! —
If thou didst ever thy dear father love, ——

HAM. O heaven!

GHOST. Revenge his foul and most unnatural
murder.⁴

² *Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres;*] So, in our poet's 108th Sonnet:

"How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted,

"In the distraction of this madding fever!" MALONE.

³ —— *fretful porcupine:*] The quartos read — *fearful* &c. Either epithet may serve. This animal is at once irascible and timid. The same image occurs in *The Romaunt of the Rose*, where Chaucer is describing the personage of *danger*:

"Like sharpe urchons his heere was grow."

An urchin is a hedge-hog.

The old copies, however have — *porpentine*, which is frequently written by our ancient poets instead of *porcupine*. So, in *Skialetheia*, a collection of Epigrams, Satires, &c. 1598:

"*Parpentine-backed*, for he lies on thornes." STEEVENS.

⁴ *Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.*] As a proof that this play was written before 1597, of which the contrary has been asserted by Mr. Holt in Dr. Johnson's Appendix, I must borrow, as usual, from Dr. Farmer: "Shakspeare is said to have been no extraordinary actor; and that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own *Hamlet*. Yet this *chef d'oeuvre* did not please: I will give you an original stroke at it. Dr. Lodge published in the year 1596, a pamphlet called *Wit's Miserie, or the World's Madnesse, discovering the incarnate Devils of the Age*, quarto. One of these devils is, *Hate-virtue*, or sorrow for another man's good successe, who, says the doctor, "is a foule lubber, and looks as pale as the vizard of the Ghost, which cried so miserably at the theatre, *Hamlet revenge.*" STEEVENS.

HAM. Murder?

GHOST. Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

HAM. Haste me to know it; that I, with wings
as swift

As meditation, or the thoughts of love,⁵
May sweep to my revenge.

GHOST. I find thee apt;
And duller should'st thou be than the fat weed
That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,⁶

I suspect that this stroke was levelled not at Shakspeare, but at the performer of the Ghost in an older play on this subject, exhibited before 1589. See *An Attempt to ascertain the order of Shakspeare's Plays*, Vol. II. MALONE.

⁵ *As meditation, or the thoughts of love,*] This similitude is extremely beautiful. The word *meditation* is consecrated, by the mysticks, to signify that stretch and flight of mind which aspires to the enjoyment of the supreme good. So that Hamlet, considering with what to compare the swiftness of his revenge, chooses two of the most rapid things in nature, the ardency of divine and human passion, in an enthusiast and a lover. WARBURTON.

The comment on the word *meditation* is so ingenious, that I hope it is just. JOHNSON.

⁶ *And duller should'st thou be than the fat weed*

That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,] Shakspeare, apparently through ignorance, makes Roman Catholicks of these Pagan Danes; and here gives a description of purgatory; but yet mixes it with the Pagan fable of Lethe's wharf. Whether he did it to insinuate to the zealous Protestants of his time, that the Pagan and Popish purgatory stood both upon the same footing of credibility, or whether it was by the same kind of licentious inadvertence that Michael Angelo brought Charon's bark into his picture of the Last Judgment, is not easy to decide. WARBURTON.

That rots itself in ease &c.] The quarto reads — That *roots* itself. Mr. Pope follows it. Otway has the same thought:

“ — like a coarse and useless dunghill weed

“ Fix'd to one spot, and rot just as I grow.”

The superiority of the reading of the folio is to me apparent: to be in a crescent state (i. e. to *root* itself) affords an idea of activity; to *rot* better suits with the dulness and inaction to which the

Would'st thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear :
 'Tis given out, that, sleeping in my orchard,
 A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
 Is by a forged process of my death
 Rankly abus'd: but know, thou noble youth,
 The serpent, that did sting thy father's life,
 Now wears his crown.

HAM. O, my prophetick soul! my uncle!

GHOST. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
 With witchcraft of his wit,⁷ with traitorous gifts,
 (O wicked wit, and gifts, that have the power
 So to seduce!) won to his shameful lust
 The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen:
 O, Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!
 From me, whose love was of that dignity,

Ghost refers. Beaumont and Fletcher have a thought somewhat similar in *The Humorous Lieutenant*:

“ This dull root pluck'd from *Lethe's* flood.” STEEVENS.

That roots itself in ease &c.] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads — *That rots itself* &c. I have preferred the reading of the original copy, because to *root itself* is a natural and easy phrase, but “ to *rot* itself,” not English. Indeed in general the readings of the original copies, when not corrupt, ought in my opinion not to be departed from, without very strong reason. *That roots itself in ease*, means, whose sluggish root is idly extended.

The modern editors read — *Lethe's* wharf; but the reading of the old copy is right. So, in Sir Aston Cockain's poems, 1658, p. 177:

“ ——— fearing these great actions might die,
 “ Neglected cast all into *Lethe lake*.” MALONE.

That Shakspeare supposed — *rots itself*, to be English, is evident from his having used the same phrase in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“ lackeying the varying tide,
 “ To *rot itself* with motion.”

See Vol. XVIII. p. 211. STEEVENS.

⁷ ——— *his* wit,] The old copies have *wits*. The subsequent line shews that it was a misprint. MALONE.

That it went hand in hand even with the vow
 I made to her in marriage ; and to decline
 Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor
 To those of mine !
 But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,
 Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven ;
 So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
 Will fate itself in a celestial bed,
 And prey on garbage.⁸
 But, soft ! methinks, I scent the morning air ;
 Brief let me be : — Sleeping within mine orchard,⁹
 My custom always of the afternoon,
 Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
 With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,^a

⁸ ——— *fate itself in a celestial bed,*
And prey on garbage.] The same image occurs again in Cymbeline:
 “ ——— ravening first
 “ The lamb, longs after for the garbage.” STEEVENS.

⁹ ——— *mine orchard,] Orchard for garden. So, in Romeo and Juliet:*
 “ The orchard walls are high, and hard to climb.”
 STEEVENS.

^a *With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,]* The word here used was more probably designed by a *metathesis*, either of the poet or transcriber, for *henebon*, that is, *henbane*; of which the most common kind (*hyoscyamus niger*) is certainly *narcotick*, and perhaps, if taken in a considerable quantity, might prove poisonous. Galen calls it cold in the third degree; by which in this, as well as *opium*, he seems not to mean an actual coldness, but the power it has of benumbing the faculties. Dioscorides ascribes to it the property of producing madness (*ὑοσνύαμος μανιώδης*). These qualities have been confirmed by several cases related in modern observations. In Wepfer we have a good account of the various effects of this root upon most of the members of a *convent* in Germany, who eat of it for supper by mistake, mixed with succory; — beat in the throat, giddiness, dimness of sight, and delirium. *Cicut. Aquatic. c. xxviii.*
 GREY;

So, in Drayton's *Barons' Wars*, p. 51:
 “ The pois'ning *henbane*, and the mandrake drad.”

And in the porches of mine ears did pour
 The leperous distilment; ² whose effect
 Holds such an enmity with blood of man,
 That, swift as quick-silver, it courses through
 The natural gates and alleys of the body;
 And, with a sudden vigour, it doth posset
 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
 The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;
 And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
 Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
 All my smooth body.
 Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand,
 Of life, of crown, of queen, at once despatch'd: ⁴
 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin, ⁵
 Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd; ⁶

Again, in the Philosopher's 4th Satire of Mars, by Robert Anton, 1616:

"The poison'd *henbane*, whose cold juice doth kill."

In Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, 1633, the word is written in a different manner:

"—— the blood of Hydra, Lerna's bane,

"The juice of *hebon*, and Cocytus' breath." STEEVENS.

² *The leperous distilment*;] So, in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, Vol. II. p. 142: "—— which being once possessed, never leaveth the patient till it hath enfeebled his state, like the qualitie of *poison distilling* through the veins even to the heart." MALONE.

Surely, the leperous *distilment* signifies the water *distilled* from *henbane*, that subsequently occasioned leprosy. STEEVENS.

⁴ —— at once despatch'd:] *Despatch'd*, for bereft.

WARBURTON.

⁵ *Cut off even in the blossom of my sin*, &c.] The very words of this part of the speech are taken (as I have been informed by a gentleman of undoubted veracity) from an old *Legend of Saints*, where a man, who was accidentally drowned, is introduced as making the same complaint. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd*;] *Unhousel'd* is without having received the sacrament.

Disappointed, as Dr. Johnson observes, "is the same as *unappointed*, and may be properly explained *unprepared*. A man wel

No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head:

furnished with things necessary for an enterprize, was said to be well appointed."

This explanation of *disappointed* may be countenanced by a quotation of Mr. Upton's from *Measure for Measure*:

"Therefore your best *appointment* make with speed."

Isabella, as Mr. Malone remarks, is the speaker, and her brother, who was condemned to die, is the person addressed.

Unanel'd is without extreme unction.

I shall now subjoin as many notes as are necessary for the support of the first and third of these explanations. I administer the bark only, not supposing any reader will be found who is desirous to swallow the whole tree.

In the *Textus Roffensis* we meet with two of these words — "The monks offering themselves to perform all priestly functions of *houfeling*, and *aveyling*." *Aveyling* is misprinted for *aneyling*.

STEEVENS.

See *Mort d'Arthur*, p. iii. c. 175: "So when he was *houfeled* and *aneled*, and had all that a Christian man ought to have," &c.

TYRWHITT.

The subsequent extract from a very scarce and curious copy of Fabian's Chronicle, printed by Pynson, 1516, seems to remove every possibility of doubt concerning the true signification of the words *anhousel'd* and *unanel'd*. The historian speaking of Pope Innocent's having laid the whole kingdom of England under an interdict, has these words: "Of the manner of this interdiccion of this lande have I seen dyverse opynyons, as some ther be that saye that the lande was interdyted thorwly and the churchis and housys of relygyon cloyd, that no where was used masse, nor dyvyne servyce, by whiche reason none of the VII sacramentis all this terme should be mynystred or occupyed, nor chylde *crystened*, nor man *confessed* nor *marryed*; but it was not so strayght. For there were dyverse placys in Englonde which were occupyed with dyvyne servyce all that season by licence purchased than or before, also chyl dren were chrystenyd throughe all the lande and men *houfelyd* and *anelyd*. Fol. 14. Septima Pars Johannis.

The Anglo-Saxon noun-substantives *husel*, (the eucharist) and *ele* (oil) are plainly the roots of these last-quoted compound adjectives—. For the meaning of the affix *an* to the last, I quote Spelman's Gloss. in loco: "Quin & dictionibus (an) adjungitur, siquidem vel majoris notationis gratia, vel ad singulare aliquid, vel unicum demonstrandum." Hence *anelyd* should seem to signify *oiled* or *anointed* by way of eminence, i. e. having received extreme unction. For

O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!⁷
 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
 A couch for luxury⁸ and damned incest.
 But, howsoever thou pursu'st this act,
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
 Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven,
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
 The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire:⁹

the confirmation of the sense given here, there is the strongest internal evidence in the passage. The historian is speaking of the VII sacraments, and he expressly names five of them, viz. baptism, marriage, auricular confession, the *eucharist*, and *extreme unction*.

The antiquary is desired to consult the edition of Fabian, printed by Pynson, 1516, because there are others, and I remember to have seen one in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, with a continuation to the end of Queen Mary, London, 1599, in which the language is much modernized. BRAND.

⁷ O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!] It was ingeniously hinted to me by a very learned lady, that this line seems to belong to Hamlet, in whose mouth it is a proper and natural exclamation; and who, according to the practice of the stage, may be supposed to interrupt so long a speech. JOHNSON.

⁸ A couch for luxury —] i. e. for lewdness. So, in *K. Lear*:

“To't luxury, pell-mell, for I lack soldiers.” STEEVENS.

See Vol. XVI. p. 410 and 453. MALONE.

⁹ — pale his uneffectual fire:] i. e. shining without heat.

WARBURTON.

To *pale* is a verb used by Lady Elizabeth Carew, in her *Tragedy of Mariam*, 1613:

“ — Death can *pale* as well

“ A cheek of roses, as a cheek less bright.”

Again, in Urry's Chaucer, p. 368: “The sterre *paleth* her white cheres by the flambes of the sonne,” &c.

Uneffectual fire, I believe, rather means, fire that is no longer seen when the light of morning approaches. So, in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, 1609:

“ — like a glow worm, —

“ The which hath fire in darkness, none in light.”

STEEVENS.

Adieu, adieu, adieu! remember me.² [Exit.

HAM. O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?

And shall I couple hell?—O fie!³—Hold, hold, my heart;

And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up!—Remember thee?

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe.⁴ Remember thee?

Yea, from the table of my memory⁵

I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven.

O most pernicious woman!

O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!

My tables,—meet it is, I set it down,⁶

² *Adieu, adieu, adieu! &c.]* The folio reads:

Adieu, adieu, Hamlet: remember me. STEEVENS.

³ — *O fie!*] These words (which hurt the measure, and from that circumstance, and their almost ludicrous turn, may be suspected as an interpolation,) are found only in the two earliest quartos. STEEVENS.

⁴ — *Remember thee?*

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat

In this distracted globe.] So, in our poet's 122d Sonnet:

“Which shall above that idle rank remain,

“Beyond all dates, even to eternity;

“Or at the least, so long as brain and heart

“Have faculty by nature to subsist.” MALONE.

— *this distracted globe.]* i. e. in this head confused with thought. STEEVENS.

⁵ *Yea, from the table of my memory —]* This expression is used by Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poesie.* MALONE.

⁶ *My tables,—meet it is, I set it down,]* This is a ridicule on the practice of the time. Hall says, in his character of the *Hypocrite,*

That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least, I am sure, it may be so in Denmark :

[*Writing.*

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word ;'

It is, *Adieu, adieu! remember me.*

I have sworn't.

HOR. [*Within.*] My lord, my lord, ——

" He will ever sit where he may be scene best, and in the midst of the sermon pulls out his *tables* in haste, as if he feared to loose that note," &c. FARMER.

No ridicule on the practice of the time could with propriety be introduced on this occasion. Hamlet avails himself of the same caution observed by the doctor in the fifth act of *Macbeth*: " I will set down whatever comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly."

" Mr. Farmer's remark, however, as to the frequent use of table-books, may be supported by many instances. So, in the Induction to *The Malcontent*, 1604: " I tell you I am one that hath seen this play often, and can give them intelligence for their action: I have most of the jests of it here in my *table-book*."

Again, in *Love's Sacrifice*, 1633:

" You are one loves courtship :

" You had some change of words; 'twere no lost labour

" To stuff your *table-books*."

Again, in *Antonio's Revenge*, 1602: " Balurdo draws out his *writing-tables* and writes.—

" *Retort and obtuse*, good words, very good words."

Again, in *Every Woman in her Humour*, 1609:

" Let your *tables* befriend your memory; write," &c.

STEEVENS.

See also *The Second Part of King Henry IV*:

" And therefore will he wipe his *tables* clean,

" And keep no *tell-tale* to his memory."

York is here speaking of the King. *Table-books* in the time of our author appear to have been used by all ranks of people. In the church they were filled with short notes of the sermon, and at the theatre with the sparkling sentences of the play. MALONE.

7 ——— *Now to my word ;*] Hamlet alludes to the *watch-word* given every day in military service, which at this time he says is, *Adieu, adieu! remember me*. So, in *The Devil's Charter*, a tragedy, 1607:

" Now to my *watch-word*——." STEEVENS.

MAR. [*Within.*] Lord Hamlet,—

HOR. [*Within.*] Heaven secure him !

HAM. So be it!

MAR. [*Within.*] Illo, ho, ho, my lord!

HAM. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.^s

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

MAR. How is't, my noble lord?

HOR. What news, my lord?

HAM. O, wonderful!

HOR. Good my lord, tell it.

HAM. No;

You will reveal it.

HOR. Not I, my lord, by heaven.

MAR. Nor I, my lord.

HAM. How say you then; would heart of man
once think it?—

But you'll be secret,—

HOR. MAR. Ay, by heaven, my lord.

HAM. There's ne'er a villain, dwelling in all
Denmark,

But he's an arrant knave.

^s ——— *come, bird, come.*] This is the call which falconers use to their hawk in the air, when they would have him come down to them. HANMER.

This expression is used in Marston's *Dutch Courtesan*, and by many others among the old dramatick writers.

It appears from all these passages, that it was the falconers' call, as Sir T. Hanmer has observed.

Again, in Tyro's *Roaring Megge, planted against the Walls of Melancholy*, &c. 4to. 1598:

“ Yet, ere I iournie, Ile go see the kyte:

“ Come, come bird, come: pox on you, can you mute?”

STEEVENS.

HOR. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from
the grave,
To tell us this.

HAM. Why, right; you are in the right;
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit, that we shake hands, and part:
You, as your business, and desire, shall point you;—
For every man hath business, and desire,
Such as it is,—and, for my own poor part,
Look you, I will go pray.

HOR. These are but wild and whirling words,
my lord.

HAM. I am sorry they offend you, heartily; yes,
'Faith, heartily.

HOR. There's no offence, my lord.

HAM. Yes, by saint Patrick,⁹ but there is, Ho-
ratio,

And much offence too. Touching this vision here,—
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you:
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'er-master it as you may. And now, good friends,
As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers.
Give me one poor request.

HOR. What is't, my lord?
We will.

HAM. Never make known what you have seen
to-night.

⁹ ——— *by saint Patrick,*] How the poet comes to make Hamlet swear by *St. Patrick*, I know not. However, at this time all the whole northern world had their learning from Ireland; to which place it had retired, and there flourished under the auspices of this Saint. But it was, I suppose, only said at random; for he makes Hamlet a student of Wittenberg. WARBURTON.

Dean Swift's "Verses on the sudden drying-up of St. Patrick's Well, 1726," contain many learned allusions to the early cultivation of literature in Ireland. NICHOLS.

HOR. MAR. My lord, we will not.

HAM. Nay, but swear't.

HOR. In faith,

My lord, not I.

MAR. Nor I, my lord, in faith.

HAM. Upon my sword.

MAR. We have sworn, my lord, already,

HAM. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

GHOST. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

HAM. Ha, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there, true-penny?²

Come on,—you hear this fellow in the cellarage,—Consent to swear.

HOR. Propose the oath, my lord.

HAM. Never to speak of this that you have seen, Swear by my sword.³

² ——— *true-penny?*] This word, as well as some of Hamlet's former exclamations, we find in the *Malcontent*, 1604:

“ Illo, ho, ho, ho; art there old *True-penny?*”

STEEVENS.

³ *Swear by my sword.*] Here the poet has preserved the manners of the ancient Danes, with whom it was religion to swear upon their swords. See *Bartholinus, De causis contempt. mort. apud Dan.*

WARBURTON.

I was once inclinable to this opinion, which is likewise well defended by Mr. Upton; but Mr. Garrick produced me a passage, I think, in *Brantome*, from which it appeared, that it was common to swear upon the sword, that is, upon the cross which the old swords always had upon the hilt. JOHNSON.

Shakspeare, it is more than probable, knew nothing of the ancient Danes, or their manners. Every extract from Dr. Farmer's pamphlet must prove as instructive to the reader as the following:

“ In the *Passus Primus* of *Pierce Plowman*,

‘ David in his daies dubbed knightes,

‘ And did them *swere on her sword* to serve truth ever.’

“ And in *Hieronymo*, the common butt of our author, and the wits of the time, says Lorenzo to Pedringano:

GHOST. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

HAM. *Hic & ubique?* then we'll shift our ground:—

Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword:
Swear by my sword,
Never to speak of this that you have heard.

GHOST. [*Beneath.*] Swear by his sword.

HAM. Well said, old mole! can't work i'the earth so fast?

- Swear on this *cross*, that what thou say'st is true:
- But if I prove thee perjurd and unjust,
- This very *sword*, whereon thou took'st thine oath,
- Shall be a worker of thy tragedy."

To the authorities produced by Dr. Farmer, the following may be added from *Holinshed*, p. 664: "Warwick kissed the cross of K. Edward's sword, as it were a vow to his promise."

Again, p. 1038, it is said: "that Warwick drew out his sword, which other of the honourable and worshipful that were then present likewise did, whom he commanded, that each one should kiss other's sword, according to an ancient custom amongst men of war in time of great danger; and herewith they made a solemn vow," &c.

Again, in Decker's comedy of *Old Fortunatus*, 1600:

"He has sworn to me on the *cross* of his pure Toledo."

Again, in his *Satiromastix*: "By the *cross* of this sword and dagger, captain, you shall take it."

In the soliloquy of *Roland* addressed to his sword, the *cross* on it is not forgotten: "—— capulo eburneo candidissime, cruce aurea splendidissime," &c. *Turpini Hist. de Gestis Caroli Mag. cap. 22.*

Again, in an ancient MS. of which some account is given in a note on the first scene of the first act of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the oath taken by a *master of defence* when his degree was conferred on him, is preserved, and runs as follows: "First you shall sweare (so help you God and halidome, and by all the christendome which God gave you at the fount-stone, and by the *cross* of this sword which doth represent unto you the *cross* which our Saviour sufered his most paynefull deathe upon,) that you shall upholde, maynteyne, and kepe to your power all soch articles as shal be heare declared unto you, and receve in the presense of me your maister, and these the rest of the maisters my bretheren heare with me at this tyme."

STEEVENS.

A worthy pioneer!—Once more remove, good friends.

HOR. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

HAM. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.⁴

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

But come;—

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy!

How strange or odd so'er I bear myself,

As I, perchance, hereafter shall think meet

To put an antick disposition on,—

That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,

With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

As, *Well, well, we know*;—or, *We could, an if we would*;—or, *If we list to speak*;—or, *There be, an if they might*;⁵—

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note

That you know aught of me:⁶—This do you swear,⁷

Spenser observes that the Irish in his time used commonly to swear by their sword. See his *View of the State of Ireland*, written in 1596. This custom, indeed, is of the highest antiquity; having prevailed, as we learn from Lucian, among the Scythians.

MALONE.

⁴ *And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.*] i. e. receive it to yourself; take it under your own roof; as much as to say, *Keep it secret*. Alluding to the laws of hospitality. Warburton.

Warburton refines too much on this passage. Hamlet means merely to request that they would seem not to know it—to be unacquainted with it. M. MASON.

⁵ — *an if they might*;] Thus the quarto. The folio reads—*an if there might*. MALONE.

⁶ *Or such ambiguous giving out, to note*

That you know aught of me:] The construction is irregular and elliptical. Swear as before, says Hamlet, that you never shall by.

So grace and mercy at your most need help you!

GHOST. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

HAM. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!⁸—So, gentlemen,

folded arms or shaking of your head *intimate that a secret is lodged in your breasts*; and by no ambiguous phrases denote that you know aught of me.

Shakspeare has in many other places begun to construct a sentence in one form, and ended it in another. So, in *All's well that ends well*: “I would the cutting of my garments would serve the turn, or the baring of my beard; and *to say* it was in stratagem.”

Again in the same play: “No more of this, Helena;—lest it be rather thought you affect a sorrow, than *to have*:” where he ought to have written *than that you have*: or, *lest you rather be thought to affect a sorrow, than to have*.

Again, *ibidem*:

“I bade her—if her fortunes ever stood
“Necessity'd to help, *that* by this token
“I would relieve her.”

Again, in *The Tempest*:

“I have with such provision in mine art
“So safely order'd, that there is *no* soul—
“No, not so much perdition as an hair
“Betid to any creature in the vessel.”

See also Vol. IV. p. 12, n. 2; and Vol. X. p. 60, n. 7; and p. 181, n. 3.

Having used the word *never* in the preceding part of the sentence, [that you *never* shall —] the poet considered the *negative* implied in what follows; and hence he wrote—“*or—to note*,” instead of *nor*. MALONE.

⁷ — *This do you swear, &c.*] The folio reads,—*this not to do, swear, &c.* STEEVENS.

Swear is used here as in many other places, as a dissyllable.

MALONE.

Here again my untutored ears revolt from a new dissyllable; nor have I scrupled, like my predecessors, to supply the pronoun—you, which must accidentally have dropped out of a line that is imperfect without it. STEEVENS.

⁸ *Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!*] The skill displayed in Shakspeare's management of his Ghost is too considerable to be overlooked. He has rivetted our attention to it by a succession of forcible circumstances:—by the previous report of the terrified centinels,—by the solemnity of the hour at which the phantom walks,—by its

With all my love I do commend me to you:
 And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
 May do, to express his love and friending to you,
 God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;
 And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
 The time is out of joint;—O cursed spite!
 That ever I was born to set it right!
 Nay, come, let's go together. [Exeunt.]

martial pride and discriminating armour, visible only *per incertam lunam*, by the glimpses of the moon,—by its long taciturnity,—by its preparation to speak, when interrupted by the morning cock,—by its mysterious reserve throughout its first scene with Hamlet,—by his resolute departure with it, and the subsequent anxiety of his attendants,—by its conducting him to a solitary angle of the platform,—by its voice from beneath the earth,—and by its unexpected burst on us in the closet.

Hamlet's late interview with the spectre, must in particular be regarded as a stroke of dramatick artifice. The phantom might have told his story in the presence of the officers and Horatio, and yet have rendered itself as inaudible to them, as afterwards to the Queen. But suspense was our poet's object; and never was it more effectually created, than in the present instance. Six times has the royal semblance appeared, but till now has been withheld from speaking. For this event we have waited with impatient curiosity, unaccompanied by lassitude, or remitted attention.

The Ghost in this tragedy, is allowed to be the genuine product of Shakspeare's strong imagination. When he afterwards avails himself of traditional phantoms, as in *Julius Caesar*, and *King Richard III.* they are but inefficacious pageants; nay, the apparition of Banquo is a mute exhibitor. Perhaps our poet despaired to equal the vigour of his early conceptions on the subject of preternatural beings, and therefore allotted them no further eminence in his dramas; or was unwilling to diminish the power of his principal shade, by an injudicious repetition of congenial images.

STEEVENS.

The verb *perturb* is used by Holinshed, and by Bacon in his *Essay on Superstition*: “—therefore atheism did never *perturb* states.” MALONE.

A C T II. S C E N E I.

*A Room in Polonius's House.**Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO.*⁹

POL. Give him this money, and these notes, Reynaldo.

REY. I will, my lord.

POL. You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,

Before you visit him, to make inquiry
Of his behaviour.

REY. My lord, I did intend it.

POL. Marry, well said: very well said.² Look
you, sir.

Inquire me first what Danſkers³ are in Paris;
And how, and who, what means, and where they
keep,

What company, at what expence; and finding,
By this encompaſſment and drift of question,
That they do know my ſon, come you more nearer
Than your particular demands will touch it:⁴

⁹ *Enter Polonius and Reynaldo.*] The quartos read — *Enter old Polonius with his man or two.* STEEVENS.

² — *well said: very well said.*] Thus alſo, the weak and tedious Shallow ſays to Bardolph, in the Second Part of *King Henry IV.* A& III. ſc. ii: “It is well ſaid, ſir; and it is well ſaid indeed too.” STEEVENS.

³ — *Danſkers* —] *Danſke* (in Warner's *Albion's England*) is the ancient name of Denmark. STEEVENS.

⁴ — *come you more nearer*
Than your particular demands will touch it:] The late editions read, and point, thus:

Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him ;

As thus,—*I know his father, and his friends, And, in part, him ;—*Do you mark this, Reynaldo ?

REY. Ay, very well, my lord.

POL. *And, in part, him ;—but, you may say,—not well :*

But, if't be he I mean, he's very wild ;

*Addicted so and so ;—*and there put on him

What forgeries you please ; marry, none so rank

As may dishonour him ; take heed of that ;

But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips,

As are companions noted and most known

To youth and liberty.

REY. As gaming, my lord.

POL. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing,⁵ quarrelling,

Drabbing :—You may go so far.

REY. My lord, that would dishonour him.

POL. 'Faith, no ; as you may season it in the charge.⁶

— come you more nearer ;

Then your particular demands will touch it :

Throughout the old copies the word which we now write—*than*, is constantly written — *then*. I have therefore printed — *than*, which the context seems to me to require, though the old copies have *then*. There is no point after the word *nearer*, either in the original quarto, 1604, or the folio. MALONE.

⁵ — drinking, fencing, swearing,] I suppose, by *fencing* is meant a too diligent frequentation of the fencing-school, a resort of violent and lawless young men. JOHNSON.

Fencing, I suppose, means, piquing himself on his skill in the use of the sword, and quarrelling and brawling, in consequence of that skill. " The cunning of *fencers*, says Goffon in his *Schoole of Abuse*, 1579, is now applied to *quarreling*: they thinke themselves no men, if for stirring of a straw, they prove not their valure uppon some bodies fleshe." MALONE.

⁶ 'Faith, no ; as you may season it &c.] The quarto reads—*Faith, as you may season it in the charge.* MALONE.

*Good fir, or so;*⁵ *or friend or gentleman,—*
According to the phrase, or the addition,
Of man, and country.

REY. Very good, my lord.

POL. And then, fir, does he this,—He does—
What was I about to say?—By the mass, I was about
to say something:—Where did I leave?

REY. At, closes in the consequence.

POL. At, closes in the consequence,⁶—*Ay, marry;*
He closes with you thus:—*I know the gentleman;*
I saw him yesterday, or t'other day,
Or then, or then; with such, or such; and, as you say,
There was he gaming; there o'ertook in his rouse;
There falling out at tennis: or, perchance,
I saw him enter such a house of sale,
(Videlicet, a brothel,) or so forth.—

See you now;

Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth:
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
With windlances, and with affays of bias,
By indirections find directions out;
So, by my former lecture and advice,
Shall you my son: You have me, have you not?

REY. My lord, I have.

POL. God be wi'you; fare you well.

REY. Good my lord,——

⁵ *Good fir, or so;*] I suspect, (with Mr. Tyrwhitt,) that the poet wrote — *Good fir, or fir, or friend, &c.* In the last act of this play, *so* is used for *so forth*: “—six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hanger, and *so*.”

MALONE.

⁶ *At, closes in the consequence,*] Thus the quarto. The folio adds —
At friend, or so, or gentleman. MALONE.

POL. Observe his inclination in yourself.⁷

REY. I shall, my lord.

POL. And let him ply his musick.

REY. Well, my lord.
[Exit.]

Enter OPHELIA.

POL. Farewell!—How now, Ophelia? what's the matter?

OPH. O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

POL. With what, in the name of heaven?

OPH. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet,—with his doublet all unbrac'd;
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ankle;⁸
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
And with a look so piteous in purport,
As if he had been loosed out of hell,
To speak of horrors,—he comes before me.

POL. Mad for thy love?

⁷ — in *yourself*.] Sir T. Hanmer reads,—*e'en* yourself, and is followed by Dr. Warburton; but perhaps *in* yourself means, in *your own person*, not by spies. JOHNSON.

The meaning seems to be—The temptations you feel, suspect in him, and be watchful of them. So, in a subsequent scene:

“For by the image of my cause, I see

“The portraiture of his.”

Again in *Timon*:

“I weigh my friend's affection with my own.” C.

⁸ *Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ankle*;] *Down-gyved* means hanging down like the loose cincture which confines the fetters round the ankles. STEEVENS.

Thus the quartos 1604, and 1605, and the folio. In the quarto of 1611, the word *gyved* was changed to *gyred*. MALONE.

OPH. My lord, I do not know;
But, truly, I do fear it.

POL. What said he?

OPH. He took me by the wrist, and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face,
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;
At last,—a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,—
He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound,
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk,⁹
And end his being: That done, he lets me go:
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out o'doors he went without their helps,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

POL. Come, go with me; I will go seek the king.
This is the very ecstasy of love;
Whose violent property foredoes itself,^a
And leads the will to desperate undertakings,
As oft as any passion under heaven,
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry,—
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

OPH. No, my good lord; but, as you did command,
I did repel his letters, and deny'd
His access to me.

⁹ — all his bulk,] i. e. all his body. So, in *The Rape of Lucrece*:

“ ————— her heart

“ Beating her *bulk*, that his hand shakes withal.”

See Vol. XV. p. 304, n. 4. MALONE.

^a — foredoes *itself*,] To *foredo* is to destroy. So, in *Othello*:

“ That either makes me, or *foredoes* me quite.”

STEEVENS.

POL. That hath made him mad.
 I am sorry, that with better heed, and judgement,
 I had not quoted him:³ I fear'd, he did but trifle,
 And meant to wreck thee; but, beshrew my jealousy!
 It seems, it is as proper to our age
 To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,
 As it is common for the younger sort
 To lack discretion.⁴ Come, go we to the king:

³ *I had not quoted him:] To quote is, I believe, to reckon, to take an account of, to take the quotient or result of a computation.*
 JOHNSON.

I find a passage in *The Isle of Gulls*, a comedy, by John Day, 1606, which proves Dr. Johnson's sense of the word to be not far from the true one:

"——'twill be a scene of mirth

"For me to *quote* his passions, and his smiles."

To *quote* on this occasion undoubtedly means to *observe*. Again, in Drayton's *Mooncalf*:

"This honest man the prophecy that noted,

"And things therein most curiously had *quoted*,

"Found all these signs," &c.

Again, in *The Woman Hater*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, the intelligencer says,—"*I'll quote him to a tittle*," i. e. I will mark or observe him.

To *quote*, as Mr. M. Mason observes, is invariably used by Shakspeare in this sense. STEEVENS.

So, in *The Rape of Lucrece*:

"Yea, the illiterate—

"Will *quote* my loathed trespass in my looks."

In this passage, in the original edition of 1594, the word is written *cote*, as it is in the quarto copy of this play. It is merely the old or corrupt spelling of the word. See Vol. VII. p. 276, n. 8, and p. 368, n. 8; Vol. IX. p. 187, n. 2; and Vol. XI. p. 428, n. 5. In Minshew's Dict. 1617, we find, "*To quote*, mark, or note, à *quotus*. Numeris enim scribentes sententias suas *notant* & distinguunt." See also Cotgrave's Dict. 1611: "*Quoter*. To *quote* or *marke* in the margent; to note by the way."

MALONE.

⁴ —— *it is as proper to our age*

To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,

As it is common for the younger sort

To lack discretion.] This is not the remark of a weak man.

The vice of age is too much suspicion. Men long accustomed to

This must be known ; which, being kept close,
might move

More grief to hide, than hate to utter love.⁵

Come.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E II.

A Room in the Castle.

*Enter King, Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,
and Attendants.*

KING. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern !

Moreover that we much did long to see you,
The need, we have to use you, did provoke
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation ; so I call it,

the wiles of life cast commonly beyond themselves, let their cunning go farther than reason can attend it. This is always the fault of a little mind, made artful by long commerce with the world.

The quartos read — *By heaven it is as proper &c.* JOHNSON. STEEVENS.

In Decker's *Wonderful Yeare*, 4to. 1603, we find an expression similar to that in the text. "Now the thirstie citizen casts beyond the moone." MALONE.

The same phrase has already occurred in *Titus Andronicus*. REED.

⁵ *This must be known ; which, being kept close, might move*

More grief to hide, than hate to utter love.] i. e. this must be made known to the King, for (being kept secret) the hiding Hamlet's love might occasion more mischief to us from him and the queen, than the uttering or revealing of it will occasion hate and resentment from Hamlet. The poet's ill and obscure expression seems to have been caused by his affectation of concluding the scene with a couplet.

Sir T. Hamner reads,

More grief to hide hate, than to utter love. JOHNSON:

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H



Since nor the exterior nor the inward man
 Resembles that it was: What it should be,
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
 So much from the understanding of himself,
 I cannot dream of: I entreat you both,
 That, — being of so young days brought up with
 him:

And, since, so neighbour'd to his youth and hu-
 mour,⁶ —

That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
 Some little time: so by your companies
 To draw him on to pleasures; and to gather,
 So much as from occasion you may glean,
 Whether aught,⁷ to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
 That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

QUEEN. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd
 of you;

And, sure I am, two men there are not living,
 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
 To show us so much gentry,⁸ and good will,
 As to expend your time with us a while,
 For the supply and profit of our hope,⁹
 Your visitation shall receive such thanks
 As fits a king's remembrance.

ROS. Both your majesties
 Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,²

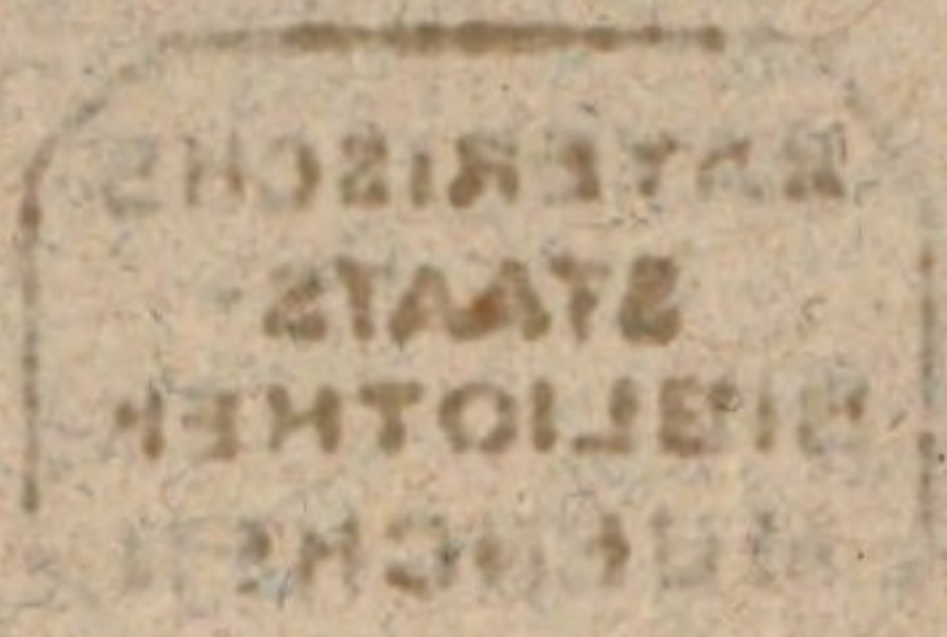
⁶ — and humour,] Thus the folio. The quartos read — *haviour*.
 STEEVENS.

⁷ *Whether aught, &c.*] This line is omitted in the folio.
 STEEVENS.

⁸ *To show us so much gentry,*] *Gentry*, for *complaisance*.
 WARBURTON.

⁹ *For the supply &c.*] That the hope which your arrival has raised
 may be completed by the desired effect. JOHNSON.

² — — *you have of us,*] I believe we should read — *o'er us*, in-
 stead of — *of us*. M. MASON.



Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

GUIL. But we both obey;
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent,²
To lay our service freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

KING. Thanks, Rosencrantz, and gentle Guildenstern.

QUEEN. Thanks, Guildenstern, and gentle Rosencrantz:

And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son. — Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

GUIL. Heavens make our presence, and our practices,
Pleasant and helpful to him!

QUEEN. Ay, amen!

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and
some Attendants.*]

Enter POLONIUS.

POL. The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully return'd.

KING. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

POL. Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,

² — in the full bent,] *Bent, for endeavour, application.*

WARBURTON.

The full bent, is the utmost extremity of exertion. The allusion is to a bow bent as far as it will go. So afterwards in this play:

“They fool me to the top of my bent.” MALONE.

I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God, and to my gracious king:
And I do think, (or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy⁴ so sure
As it hath us'd to do,) that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

KING. O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

POL. Give first admittance to the embassadors;
My news shall be the fruit⁵ to that great feast.

KING. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them
in. [Exit POLONIUS.

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all our son's distemper.

QUEEN. I doubt, it is no other but the main;
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

Re-enter POLONIUS, with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.

KING. Well, we shall sift him. — Welcome, my
good friends!

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

VOLT. Most fair return of greetings, and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies; which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;
But, better look'd into, he truly found
It was against your highness: Whereat griev'd, —
That so his sickness, age, and impotence,

⁴ — the trail of policy —] The trail is the course of an animal pursued by the scent. JOHNSON.

⁵ — the fruit —] The desert after the meat. JOHNSON.

Was falsely borne in hand,⁶ — sends out arrests
On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;
Receives rebuke from Norway; and, in fine,
Makes vow before his uncle, never more
To give the assay⁷ of arms against your majesty.
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee;⁸
And his commission, to employ those soldiers,
So levied as before, against the Polack:
With an entreaty, herein further shown,

[Gives a paper.

That it might please you to give quiet pass
Through your dominions for this enterprize;

⁶ — borne in hand,] i. e. deceived, imposed on. So, in *Macbeth*,
A& III:

“ How you were *borne in hand*, how cross’d,” &c.

See note on this passage, Vol. XI. p. 138, n. 3. STEEVENS.

⁷ To give the assay —] To take the assay was a technical expression,
originally applied to those who tasted wine for princes and great
men. See Vol. XX. p. 540, n. 4. MALONE.

⁸ Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee;] This reading
first obtained in the edition put out by the players. But all the
old quartos (from 1605, downwards,) read *threescore*.

THEOBALD.

The metre is destroyed by the alteration; and threescore thousand
crowns, in the days of Hamlet, was an enormous sum of money.

M. MASON.

— annual fee;] Fee in this place signifies reward, recompence.
So, in *All's well that ends well*:

“ — Not helping, death's my fee;

“ But if I help, what do you promise me?”

The word is commonly used in Scotland, for wages, as we say
lawyer's fee, *physician's fee*. STEEVENS.

Fee is defined by Minshew in his *Dict.* 1617, a reward.

MALONE.

I have restored the reading of the folio. Mr. Ritson explains it,
I think, rightly thus: the king gave his nephew a *feud* or *fee* (in
land) of that yearly value. REED.

On such regards of safety, and allowance,
As therein are set down.

KING.

It likes us well;

And, at our more consider'd time, we'll read,
Answer, and think upon this business.

Mean time, we thank you for your well-took labour:

Go to your rest; at night we'll feast⁹ together:
Most welcome home!

[*Exeunt* VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.

POL.

This business is well ended.

My liege, and madam, to expostulate²

⁹ — at night we'll feast —] The king's intemperance is never suffered to be forgotten. JOHNSON.

² My liege, and madam, to expostulate —] To expostulate, for to enquire or discuss.

The strokes of humour in this speech are admirable. Polonius's character is that of a weak, pedant, minister of state. His declamation is a fine satire on the impertinent oratory then in vogue, which placed reason in the formality of method, and wit in the gingle and play of words. With what art is he made to pride himself in his wit:

“ That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true, 'tis pity:

“ And pity 'tis, 'tis true: A foolish figure;

“ But farewell it, — —.”

And how exquisitely does the poet ridicule the *reasoning in fashion*, where he makes Polonius remark on Hamlet's madness:

“ Though this be *madness*, yet there's *method* in't:”

As if method, which the wits of that age thought the most essential quality of a good discourse, would make amends for the madness. It was *madness* indeed, yet Polonius could comfort himself with this reflection, that at least it was *method*. It is certain Shakspeare excels in nothing more than in the preservation of his characters; *To this life and variety of character* (says our great poet [Pope] in his admirable preface to Shakspeare) *we must add the wonderful preservation*. We have said what is the character of Polonius; and it is allowed on all hands to be drawn with wonderful life and spirit, yet the *unity* of it has been thought by some to be grossly violated in the excellent *precepts and instructions* which Shakspeare makes his statesman give his son and servant in the middle of the *first*, and

What majesty should be, what duty is,
Why day is day, night, night, and time is time,

beginning of the *second act*. But I will venture to say, these criticks have not entered into the poet's art and address in this particular. He had a mind to ornament his scenes with those fine lessons of social life; but his Polonius was too weak to be author of them, though he was pedant enough to have met with them in his reading, and fop enough to get them by heart, and retail them for his own. And this the poet has finely shewn us was the case, where, in the middle of Polonius's instructions to his servant, he makes him, though without having received any interruption, forget his lesson, and say,

"And then, sir, does he this;

"He does ——— What was I about to say?

"I was about to say something ——— where did I leave?"

The servant replies,

At, closes in the consequence. This sets Polonius right, and he goes on,

"*At* closes in the consequence.

"—— *Ay* marry,

"*He* closes thus: ——— I know the gentleman," &c.

which shews the very words got by heart which he was repeating. Otherwise *closes in the consequence*, which conveys no particular idea of the subject he was upon, could never have made him recollect where he broke off. This is an extraordinary instance of the poet's art, and attention to the preservation of character.

WARBURTON.

This account of the character of Polonius, though it sufficiently reconciles the seeming inconsistency of so much wisdom with so much folly, does not perhaps correspond exactly to the ideas of our author. The commentator makes the character of Polonius, a character only of manners, discriminated by properties superficial, accidental, and acquired. The poet intended a nobler delineation of a mixed character of manners and of nature. Polonius is a man bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observation, confident in his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, and declining into dotage. His mode of oratory is truly represented as designed to ridicule the practice of those times, of prefaces that made no introduction, and of method that embarrassed rather than explained. This part of his character is accidental, the rest is natural. Such a man is positive and confident, because he knows that his mind was once strong, and knows not that it is become weak. Such a man excels in general principles, but fails in the particular application. He is knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight.

Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
 Therefore, — since brevity is the soul of wit,
 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes, —
 I will be brief: Your noble son is mad:
 Mad call I it: for, to define true madness,
 What is't, but to be nothing else but mad:
 But let that go.

QUEEN. More matter, with less art.

POL. Madam, I swear, I use no art at all.
 That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true, 'tis pity;
 And pity 'tis, 'tis true: a foolish figure:
 But farewell it, for I will use no art.
 Mad let us grant him then: and now remains,
 That we find out the cause of this effect;
 Or, rather say, the cause of this defect;
 For this effect, defective, comes by cause:
 Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
 Perpend.
 I have a daughter; have, while she is mine;
 Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
 Hath given me this: Now gather, and surmise.

While he depends upon his memory, and can draw from his repositories of knowledge, he utters weighty sentences, and gives useful counsel; but as the mind in its enfeebled state cannot be kept long busy and intent, the old man is subject to sudden dereliction of his faculties, he loses the order of his ideas and entangles himself in his own thoughts, till he recovers the leading principle, and falls again into his former train. This idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom, will solve all the phenomena of the character of Polonius. JOHNSON.

Nothing can be more just, judicious, and masterly, than Johnson's delineation of the character of Polonius; and I cannot read it without heartily regretting that he did not exert his great abilities and discriminating powers, in delineating the strange, inconsistent, and indecisive character of Hamlet, to which I confess myself unequal.

M. MASON.

—*To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,*³ —

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; *beautified* is a vile phrase; but you shall hear.—Thus:

*In her excellent white bosom, these,*⁴ &c.—

QUEEN. Came this from Hamlet to her?

³ — *To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,*] Mr. Theobald for *beautified* substituted *beatified*. MALONE.

Dr. Warburton has followed Mr. Theobald; but I am in doubt whether *beautified*, though, as Polonius calls it, a *vile phrase*, be not the proper word. *Beautified* seems to be a *vile phrase*, for the ambiguity of its meaning. JOHNSON.

Heywood, in his *History of Edward VI.* says “*Katherine Parre, queen dowager to king Henry VIII, was a woman beautified with many excellent virtues.*” FARMER.

So, in *The Hog hath lost his Pearl*, 1614:

“A maid of rich endowments, *beautified*

“With all the virtues nature could bestow.”

Again, Nash dedicates his *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*, 1594: “to the most *beautified* lady, the lady Elizabeth Carey.”

Again, in Greene's *Mamillia*, 1693: “—— although thy person is so bravely *beautified* with the dowries of nature.”

Ill and *vile* as the phrase may be, our author has used it again in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

“—— seeing you are *beautified*

“With goodly shape,” &c. STEEVENS.

By *beautified* Hamlet means *beautiful*. But Polonius, taking the word in the more strictly grammatical sense of *being made beautiful*, calls it a *vile phrase*, as implying that his daughter's beauty was the effect of art. M. MASON.

⁴ *In her excellent white bosom, these,*] So, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

“Thy letters ——

“Which, being writ to me, shall be deliver'd

“Even in the *milk-white bosom of thy love.*”

See Vol. IV. p. 236, n. 2. STEEVENS.

I have followed the quarto. The folio reads:

These in her excellent white bosom, these, &c.

In our poet's time the word *These* was usually added at the end of the superscription of letters, but I have never met with it both at the beginning and end. MALONE.

POL. Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful.—

*Doubt thou, the stars are fire; [Reads.
Doubt, that the sun doth move:
Doubt truth to be a liar;
But never doubt, I love.*

*O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have
not art to reckon my groans: but that I love thee best,
O most best,⁵ believe it. Adieu.*

*Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this
machine is to him, Hamlet.⁶*

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me:
And more above,⁷ hath his sollicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means, and place,
All given to mine ear.

KING. But how hath she
Receiv'd his love?

POL. What do you think of me?

KING. As of a man faithful and honourable.

POL. I would fain prove so. But what might
you think,
When I had seen this hot love on the wing,

⁵ — O most best,] So, in *Acolastus*, a comedy, 1540:
“ — that same most best redresser or reformer, is God.”

STEEVENS.

⁶ — whilst this machine is to him, Hamlet.] These words will
not be ill explained by the conclusion of one of the *Letters of the
Paston Family*, Vol. II. p. 43: “ — for your pleasure, whyle
my wylls be my owne.”

The phrase employed by Hamlet seems to have a French con-
struction. *Pendant que cette machine est à lui*. To be one's own
man is a vulgar expression, but means much the same as Virgil's

Dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos regit artus.

STEEVENS.

⁷ — more above,] is, moreover, besides. JOHNSON.

(As I perceiv'd it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me,) what might you,
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,
If I had play'd the desk, or table-book;
Or given my heart a working, mute and dumb;
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;
What might you think?⁸ no, I went round⁹ to
work,

And my young mistress thus did I bespeak;
*Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy sphere;*²
This must not be: and then I precepts gave her,³

⁸ *If I had play'd the desk, or table-book;
Or given my heart a working, mute and dumb;
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;*

What might you think?] i. e. If either I had conveyed intelligence between them, and been the confident of their amours [play'd the desk or table-book,] or had connived at it, only observed them in secret, without acquainting my daughter with my discovery [given my heart a mute and dumb working;] or lastly, had been negligent in observing the intrigue, and overlooked it [looked upon this love with idle sight;] what would you have thought of me? WARBURTON.

I doubt whether the first line is rightly explained. It may mean, if I had lock'd up this secret in my own breast, as closely as if it were confined in a desk or table-book. MALONE.

Or given my heart a working, mute and dumb;] The folio reads—a *winking*. STEEVENS.

The same pleonasm [*mute and dumb*] is found in our author's *Rape of Lucrece*:

“And in my hearing be you *mute and dumb*.” MALONE.

⁹ — round —] i. e. roundly, without reserve. So, Polonius says in the third act: “— be *round* with him.”

STEEVENS.

² *Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy sphere;*] The quarto, 1604, and the first folio, for *sphere*, have *star*. The correction was made by the editor of the second folio. MALONE.

³ — precepts gave her,] Thus the folio. The two elder quartos read—*prescripts*. I have chosen the most familiar of the two readings. Polonius has already said to his son:

“And these few *precepts* in thy memory

“Look thou *character*.” STEEVENS.

That she should lock herself from his resort,
 Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
 Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;⁴
 And he, repulsed, (a short tale to make,)
 Fell into a sadness; then into a fast;⁵
 Thence to a watch; thence into a weakness;
 Thence to a lightness; and, by this declension,
 Into the madness wherein now he raves,
 And all we mourn for.

KING. Do you think, 'tis this?

QUEEN. It may be, very likely.

POL. Hath there been such a time, (I'd fain
 know that,)

That I have positively said, 'Tis so,
 When it prov'd otherwise?

KING. Not that I know.

POL. Take this from this, if this be otherwise:
 [*Pointing to his head and shoulder.*

¶ The original copy in my opinion is right. Polonius had ordered his daughter to lock herself from Hamlet's resort, &c. See p. 59:

"I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,

"Have you so slander any moment's leisure

"As to give words or talk with the lord Hamlet:

"Look to't, I charge you." MALONE.

⁴ Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;] She took the fruits of advice when she obeyed advice, the advice was then made fruitful. JOHNSON.

⁵ — (a short tale to make,)

Fell into a sadness; then into a fast; &c.] The ridicule of this character is here admirably sustained. He would not only be thought to have discovered this intrigue by his own sagacity, but to have remarked all the stages of Hamlet's disorder, from his sadness to his raving, as regularly as his physician could have done; when all the while the madness was only feigned. The humour of this is exquisite from a man who tells us, with a confidence peculiar to small politicians, that he could find

"Where truth was hid, though it were hid indeed

"Within the centre." WARBURTON.

If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre.

KING. How may we try it further?

POL. You know, sometimes he walks four hours
together,⁶
Here in the lobby.

QUEEN. So he does, indeed.

POL. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to
him:

Be you and I behind an arras then;
Mark the encounter: if he love her not,
And be not from his reason fallen thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm, and carters.⁷

KING.

We will try it.

⁶ — four hours together,] Perhaps it would be better were we
to read indefinitely,

— for hours together. TYRWHITT.

I formerly was inclined to adopt Mr. Tyrwhitt's proposed emen-
dation; but have now no doubt that the text is right. The ex-
pression, *four hours together, two hours together, &c.* appears to
have been common: So, in *King Lear*, A & I:

“Edm. Spake you with him?”

“Edg. Ay, two hours together.”

Again, in *The Winter's Tale*:

“— ay, and have been, any time these four hours.”

Again, in Webster's *Dutchess of Malfy*, 1623:

“She will muse four hours together, and her silence

“Methinks expresth more than if she spake.”

MALONE.

⁷ At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him:

Be you and I behind an arras then;

Mark the encounter: if he love her not,

And be not from his reason fallen thereon,

Let me be no assistant for a state,

But keep a farm, and carters.]

The scheme of throwing
Ophelia in Hamlet's way, in order to try his sanity, as well as the

Enter HAMLET, reading.

QUEEN. But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

address of the King in a former scene to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern,

“ ——— I entreat you both ——
 “ That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
 “ Some little time; so by your companies
 “ To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather
 “ So much as from occasion you may glean,
 “ Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus,
 “ That, open'd, lies within our remedy;—”

seem to have been formed on the following slight hints in *The History of Hamlet*, bl. let. fig. C. 3: “ They counselled to try and know if possible, how to discover the intent and meaning of the young prince; and they could find no better nor more fit invention to intrap him, than to set some faire and beautiful woman in a secret place, that with flattering speeches and all the craftiest meanes she could, should purposely seek to allure his mind to have his pleasure of her.—To this end, *certain courtiers* were appointed to lead Hamlet to a solitary place, within the woods, where they brought the woman, inciting him to take their pleasures together. And surely the poore prince at this assault had beene in great danger, if a gentleman that in Horvendille's time had been nourished with him, had not showne himselfe more affectioned to the bringing up he had received with Hamlet, than desirous to please the tyrant.—This gentleman bare the courtiers company, making full account that the least shewe of perfect sence and wisdom that Hamlet should make, would be sufficient to cause him to loose his life; and therefore by certaine signes he gave Hamlet intelligence in what danger he was like to fall, if by any meanes he seemed to obeye, or once like the wanton toyes and vicious provocations of the gentlewoman sent thither by his uncle: which much abashed the prince, as then wholly being in affection to the lady. But by her he was likewise informed of the treason, as one that from her infancy loved and favoured him.—The prince in this sort having deceived the courtiers and the ladys expectation, that affirmed and swore hee never once offered to have his pleasure of the woman, although in subtlety he affirmed the contrary, every man thereupon assured themselves that without doubt he was distraught of his senses;—so that as then Fengon's practise took no effect.”

POL. Away, I do beseech you, both away;
I'll board him⁸ presently:—O, give me leave.—

[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.*]

How does my good lord Hamlet?

HAM. Well, god-'a-mercy.

POL. Do you know me, my lord?

HAM. Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

POL. Not I, my lord.

HAM. Then I would you were so honest a man.

POL. Honest, my lord?

HAM. Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes,
is to be one man pick'd out of ten thousand.

POL. That's very true, my lord.

HAM. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead
dog, being a god, kissing carrion,——Have you a
daughter?⁹

Here we find the rude outlines of the characters of Ophelia, and Horatio,—the gentleman that in the time of Horvendille (the father of Hamlet) had been nourished with him. But in this piece there are no traits of the character of Polonius. There is indeed a counsellor, and he places himself in the queen's chamber behind the arras;—but this is the whole. MALONE.

⁸ I'll board him —] i. e. accost, address him. See Vol. V. p. 233, n. 8. REED.

⁹ For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god, kissing carrion, —— Have you a daughter?] [Old copies — a good kissing carrion,] The editors seeing Hamlet counterfeit madness, thought they might safely put any nonsense into his mouth. But this strange passage, when set right, will be seen to contain as great and sublime a reflection as any the poet puts into his hero's mouth throughout the whole play. We will first give the true reading, which is this: *For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god, kissing carrion, ——*. As to the sense we may observe, that the illative particle [for] shows the speaker to be reasoning from something he had said before: what that was we learn in these words, *to be honest, as*

POL. I have, my lord.

HAM. Let her not walk i'the sun: conception is

this world goes, is to be one picked out of ten thousand. Having said this, the chain of ideas led him to reflect upon the argument which libertines bring against Providence from the circumstance of abounding evil. In the next speech therefore he endeavours to answer that objection, and vindicate Providence, even on a supposition of the fact, that almost all men were wicked. His argument in the two lines in question is to this purpose,—*But why need we wonder at this abounding of evil? For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, which though a god, yet shedding its heat and influence upon carrion*——Here he stops short, lest talking too consequentially the hearer should suspect his madness to be feigned; and so turns him off from the subject, by enquiring of his daughter. But the inference which he intended to make, was a very noble one, and to this purpose. If this (says he) be the case, that the effect follows the thing operated upon [*carrion*] and not the thing operating [*a god,*] why need we wonder, that the supreme cause of all things diffusing its blessings on mankind, who is, as it were, a dead carrion, dead in original sin, man, instead of a proper return of duty, should breed only corruption and vices? This is the argument at length; and is as noble a one in behalf of Providence as could come from the schools of divinity. But this wonderful man had an art not only of acquainting the audience with what his actors *say*, but with what they *think*. The sentiment too is altogether in character, for Hamlet is perpetually moralizing, and his circumstances make this reflection very natural. The same thought, something diversified, as on a different occasion, he uses again in *Measure for Measure*, which will serve to confirm these observations:

“The tempter or the tempted, who sins most?

“Not she; nor doth she tempt; but it is I

“That lying by the violet in the sun,

“Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,

“Corrupt by virtuous season.”

And the same kind of *expression* is in *Cymbeline*:

“Common-kissing Titan.” WARBURTON.

This is a noble emendation which almost sets the critick on a level with the author. JOHNSON.

Dr. Warburton, in my apprehension, did not understand the passage. I have therefore omitted his laboured comment on it, in which he endeavours to prove that Shakspeare intended it as a vindication of the ways of Providence in permitting evil to abound in the world. He does not indeed pretend that this profound

a blessing;² but as your daughter may conceive,—friend, look to't.

meaning can be drawn from what Hamlet *says*; but that this is what he was *thinking of*; for “this wonderful man (Shakspeare) had an art not only of acquainting the audience with what his actors *say*, but with what they *think*?”

Hamlet's observation is, I think, simply this. He has just remarked that honesty is very rare in the world. To this Polonius assents. The prince then adds, that since there is so little virtue in the world, since corruption abounds every where, and maggots are *bred* by the sun, even in a dead dog, Polonius ought to take care to prevent his daughter from walking in the sun, lest she should prove “a *breeder* of sinners;” for though *conception* in general be a blessing, yet as Ophelia (whom Hamlet supposes to be as frail as the rest of the world,) might chance to *conceive*, it might be a calamity. The maggots *breeding* in a dead dog, seem to have been mentioned merely to introduce the word *conception*; on which word, as Mr. Steevens has observed, Shakspeare has play'd in *King Lear*: and probably a similar quibble was intended here. The word, however, may have been used in its ordinary sense, for *pregnancy*, without any double meaning.

The slight connection between this and the preceding passage, and Hamlet's abrupt question,—*Have you a daughter?* were manifestly intended more strongly to impress Polonius with the belief of the prince's madness.

Perhaps this passage ought rather to be regulated thus:—“being a *god-kissing* carrion;” i. e. a carrion that kisses the sun. The participle *being* naturally refers to the last antecedent, *dog*. Had Shakspeare intended that it should be referred to *sun*, he would probably have written—“*he* being a god,” &c. We have many similar compound epithets in these plays. Thus, in *King Lear*, A& II. sc. i. Kent speaks of “*ear-kissing* arguments.” Again, more appositely in the play before us:

“New lighted on a *heaven-kissing* hill.”

Again, in *The Rape of Lucrece*:

“Threatning *cloud-kissing* Ilion with annoy.”

However, the instance quoted from *Cymbeline* by Dr. Warburton, “—— *common-kissing* Titan,” seems in favour of the regulation that has been hitherto made; for here we find the poet considered the sun as kissing the carrion, not the carrion as kissing the sun. So, also in *King Henry IV. Part I*: “Didst thou never see *Titan* kiss a dish of butter?” The following lines also in the historical play of *King Edward III. 1596*, which Shakspeare had certainly

POL. How say you by that? [*Aside.*] Still harping on my daughter:—yet he knew me not at first; he said, I was a fishmonger: He is far gone, far gone: and, truly, in my youth I suffer'd much extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him again.—What do you read, my lord?

HAM. Words, words, words!

POL. What is the matter, my lord?

HAM. Between who?

POL. I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

seen, are, it must be acknowledged, adverse to the regulation I have suggested:

“The freshest *summer's day* doth soonest taint.

“The loathed *carriage*, that it seems to kiss.”

In justice to Dr. Johnson, I should add, that the high elogium which he has pronounced on Dr. Warburton's emendation, was founded on the *comment* which accompanied it; of which, however, I think, his judgement must have condemned the reasoning, though his goodness and piety approved its moral tendency. MALONE.

As a doubt, at least, may be entertained on this subject, I have not ventured to expunge a note written by a great critick, and applauded by a greater. STEEVENS.

“—conception is a blessing; &c.] Thus the quarto. The folio reads thus: “—conception is a blessing; but not as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to't.” The meaning seems to be, *conception* (i. e. understanding) is a blessing: but as your daughter may *conceive* (i. e. be pregnant,) friend look to't, i. e. have a care of that. The same quibble occurs in the first scene of *King Lear*:

“Kent. I cannot *conceive* you, sir.

“Glo. Sir, this young fellow's mother *could*.”

STEEVENS.

The word *not*, I have no doubt, was inserted by the editor of the folio, in consequence of his not understanding the passage. A little lower we find a similar interpolation in some of the copies, probably from the same cause: “You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will *not* more willingly part withal, except my life.” MALONE.

HAM. Slanders, fir: for the fatirical rogue says here, that old men have grey beards;^a that their faces are wrinkled; their eyes purging thick amber, and plum-tree gum; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: All which, fir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, fir, shall be as old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

POL. Though this be madness, yet there's me-

^a *Slanders, fir: for the fatirical rogue says here, that old men &c.]*
By the *fatirical rogue* he means Juvenal in his 10th Satire:

“ Da spatium vitæ, multos da Jupiter annos;
“ Hoc recto vultu, solum hoc & pallidus optas.
“ Sed quàm continuis & quantis longa senectus
“ Plena malis! *deformem, & tetrum ante omnia vultum,*
“ *Dissemblemque sui,*” &c.

Nothing could be finer imagined for Hamlet, in his circumstances, than the bringing him in reading a description of the evils of long life. WARBURTON.

Had Shakspeare read *Juvenal* in the original, he had met with

“ De temone Britanno, Excidet Arviragus”——

and

“ —— Uxorem, *Posthume*, ducis?”

We should not then have had continually in *Cymbeline*, *Arviragus*, and *Posthūmus*. Should it be said that the *quantity* in the former word might be forgotten, it is clear from the mistake in the latter, that Shakspeare could not possibly have read any one of the Roman poets.

There was a translation of the 10th Satire of *Juvenal* by Sir John Beaumont, the elder brother of the famous Francis: but I cannot tell whether it was printed in Shakspeare's time. In that age of quotation, every classick might be picked up by *piece-meal*.

I forgot to mention in its proper place, that another description of *Old Age* in *As you like it*, has been called a parody on a passage in a French poem of Garnier. It is trifling to say any thing about this, after the observation I made in *Macbeth*: but one may remark once for all, that Shakspeare wrote for the *people*; and could not have been so absurd as to bring forward any allusion, which had not been familiarized by some accident or other. FARMER.

thod in it. [*Aside.*] Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

HAM. Into my grave?

POL. Indeed, that is out o'the air.—How pregnant sometimes his replies are!³ a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be deliver'd of. I will leave him, and suddenly⁴ contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

HAM. You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal ; except my life, except my life, except my life.

POL. Fare you well, my lord.

HAM. These tedious old fools!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ⁵ and GUILDENSTERN.

POL. You go to seek the lord Hamlet; there he is.

ROS. God save you, sir!

[*To POLONIUS.*
[*Exit POLONIUS.*

GUIL. My honour'd lord!—

ROS. My most dear lord!—

HAM. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

³ *How pregnant &c.*] *Pregnant* is ready, dexterous, apt. So, in *Twelfth Night*:

“ ——— a wickedness

“ Wherein the *pregnant* enemy doth much.” STEEVENS.

⁴ ——— *and suddenly &c.*] This, and the greatest part of the two following lines, are omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

⁵ ——— *Rosencrantz*—] There was an ambassador of that name in England about the time when this play was written. STEEVENS.

ROS. As the indifferent children of the earth.

GUIL. Happy, in that we are not overhappy;
On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

HAM. Nor the soles of her shoe?

ROS. Neither, my lord.

HAM. Then you live about her waist, or in the
middle of her favours?

GUIL. Faith, her privates we.

HAM. In the secret parts of fortune? O, most
true; she is a strumpet. What news?

ROS. None, my lord; but that the world's grown
honest.

HAM. Then is doomsday near: But your news is
not true. [Let me⁶ question more in particular:
What have you, my good friends, deserved at the
hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hi-
ther?

GUIL. Prison, my lord!

HAM. Denmark's a prison.

ROS. Then is the world one.

HAM. A goodly one; in which there are many
confines, wards, and dungeons; Denmark being
one of the worst.

ROS. We think not so, my lord.

HAM. Why, then 'tis none to you; for there is
nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it
so: to me it is a prison.

ROS. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis
too narrow for your mind.

HAM. O God! I could be bounded in a nutshell,

⁶ [Let me &c.] All within the crotchets is wanting in the
quartos. STEEVENS.

and count myself a king of infinite space; were it not that I have bad dreams.

GUIL. Which dreams, indeed, are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.⁷

HAM. A dream itself is but a shadow.

ROS. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality, that it is but a shadow's shadow.

HAM. Then are our beggars, bodies;⁸ and our monarchs, and outstretch'd heroes, the beggars' shadows: Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

ROS. GUIL. We'll wait upon you.

HAM. No such matter: I will not fort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended.] But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elfinore?

ROS. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

HAM. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear, a halfpenny.⁹ Were you not sent for?

⁷ ——— *the shadow of a dream.*] Shakspeare has accidentally inverted an expression of Pindar, that the state of humanity is *οἷός ἐστιν ὁ ὕπνῳ*, the dream of a shadow. JOHNSON.

So, Davies:

“Man's life is but a dreame, nay, less than so,

“*A shadow of a dreame.*” FARMER.

So, in the tragedy of *Darius*, 1603, by Lord Sterline:

“Whose best was but the *shadow of a dream.*”

STEEVENS.

⁸ *Then are our beggars, bodies;*] Shakspeare seems here to design a ridicule of those declamations against wealth and greatness, that seem to make happiness consist in poverty. JOHNSON.

⁹ ——— *too dear, a halfpenny.*] i. e. a half-penny too dear: they are worth nothing. The modern editors read—*at* a half-penny.

MALONE.

Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come; deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

GUIL. What should we say, my lord?

HAM. Any thing—but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know, the good king and queen have sent for you.

ROS. To what end, my lord?

HAM. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

ROS. What say you? [To GUILDENSTERN.]

HAM. Nay, then I have an eye of you;^a [*Aside.*]—if you love me, hold not off.

GUID. My lord, we were sent for.

HAM. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late,³ (but, wherefore, I know not,) lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises: and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory;

^a *Nay, then I have an eye of you;*] An eye of you means, I have a glimpse of your meaning. STEEVENS.

³ *I have of late, &c.*] This is an admirable description of a rooted melancholy sprung from thickness of blood; and artfully imagined to hide the true cause of his disorder from the penetration of these two friends, who were set over him as spies.

WARBURTON.

this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament,⁴ this majestical roof fretted with golden fire,⁵ why, it appears no other thing to me, than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form, and moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me,—nor woman neither; though, by your smiling, you seem to say so.

ROS. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

HAM. Why did you laugh then, when I said, *Man delights not me?*

ROS. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment⁶ the players shall receive from you: we coted them on the way;⁷ and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

⁴ ——— *this brave o'erhanging firmament,*] Thus the quarto. The folio reads,—*this brave o'er-hanging, this, &c.* STEEVENS.

⁵ ——— *this most excellent canopy, the air,—this majestical roof fretted with golden fire,*] So, in our author's 21st Sonnet:

“As those gold candles, fix'd in heaven's air.”

Again, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

“—— Look, how the floor of heaven

“Is thick inlaid with patins of bright gold!” MALONE.

⁶ ——— *lenten entertainment* —] i. e. sparing, like the entertainments given in *Lent*. So, in *The Duke's Mistress*, by Shirley, 1631:

“—— to maintain you with bisket,

“Poor John, and half a livery, to read moral virtue

“And *lenten* lectures.” STEEVENS.

⁷ ——— *we coted them on the way;*] To *cote* is to overtake. I meet with this word in *The Return from Parnassus*, a comedy, 1606:

“—— marry we presently coted and outstript them.”

HAM. He that plays the king, shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me: the adventurous knight shall use his foil, and target: the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace: ⁸ the clown shall make those laugh, whose lungs are tickled o'the fere; ⁹ and the

Again, in Goldings Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, 1587, Book II:

"With that Hippomenes coted her."

Again, in Warner's *Albion's England*, 1602, Book VI. chap. xxx:

"Gods and goddeses for wantonnes out-coted."

Again, in Drant's translation of Horace's satires, 1567:

"For he that thinks to coat all men, and all to overgoe."

Chapman has more than once used the word in his version of the 23d *Iliad*.

See Vol. VII. p. 276, n. 8.

In the laws of coursing, says Mr. Tollet, "a cote is when a greyhound goes endways by the side of his fellow, and gives the hare a turn." This quotation seems to point out the etymology of the verb to be from the French *coté*, the side. STEEVENS.

⁸ —shall end his part in peace:] After these words the folio adds—the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o'the fere. WARBURTON.

⁹ —the clown shall make those laugh, whose lungs are tickled o'the fere;] i. e. those who are asthmatical, and to whom laughter is most uneasy. This is the case (as I am told) with those whose lungs are tickled by the fere or serum: but about these words I am neither very confident, nor very solicitous. Will the following passage in *The Tempest* be of use to any future commentator?

"—to minister occasion to these gentlemen, who are of such sensible and nimble lungs, that they always use to laugh at nothing."

The word *seare* occurs as unintelligibly in an ancient *Dialogue between the Comen Secretary and Jelowsy, touchynge the unstablenes of Harlottes*, bl. l. no date:

"And wyll byde whysperynge in the eare,

"Thynke ye her tayle is not light of the seare?"

The fere is likewise a part about a hawk. STEEVENS.

These words are not in the quarto. I am by no means satisfied with the explanation given, though I have nothing satisfactory to propose. I believe Hamlet only means, that the clown shall make those laugh who have a disposition to laugh; who are pleased with their entertainment. That no asthmatick disease was in contemplation, may be inferred from both the words used, *tickled* and

lady shall say her mind freely,² or the blank verse shall halt for't.—What players are they?

ROS. Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city.

HAM. How chances it, they travel?³ their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

ROS. I think, their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.⁴

lungs; each of which seems to have a relation to laughter, and the latter to have been considered by Shakspeare, as (if I may so express myself,) its natural seat. So, in *Coriolanus*:

“ — with a kind of smile,

“ Which ne'er came from the lungs,—.”

Again, in *As you like it*:

“ — When I did hear

“ The motley fool thus moral on the time,

“ My lungs began to crow like chanticleer.”

O'the sere, or *of the sere*, means, I think, *by the sere*; but the word *sere* I am unable to explain, and suspect it to be corrupt. Perhaps we should read—the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled *o'the scene*, i. e. *by the scene*. A similar corruption has happened in another place, where we find *scare* for *scene*. See Vol. V. p. 176, n. 4. MALONE.

² — the lady shall say her mind &c.] The lady shall have no obstruction, unless from the lameness of the verse. JOHNSON.

I think, the meaning is,—The lady shall mar the measure of the verse, rather than not express herself freely or fully.

HENDERSON.

³ *How chances it, they travel?*] To *travel*, in Shakspeare's time was the technical word, for which we have substituted *stroll*. So, in the Office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels to King Charles the First, a manuscript of which an account is given in Vol. III.: “ 1622. Feb. 17, for a certificate for the Palfgrave's servants to *travel* into the country for six weeks, 10s.” Again, in Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*, 1601: “ If he pen for thee once, thou shalt not need to *travell*, with thy pumps full of gravell, any more, after a blinde jade and a hamper, and stalk upon boords and barrel-heads to an old crackt trumpet.” These words are addressed to a player. MALONE.

⁴ *I think, their inhibition &c.*] I fancy this is transposed: Hamlet

HAM. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so follow'd?

enquires not about an *inhibition*, but an *innovation*; the answer therefore probably was,—*I think, their innovation, that is, their new practice of strolling, comes by means of the late inhibition.*

JOHNSON.

The drift of Hamlet's question appears to be this.—How chances it they travel?—i. e. *How happens it that they are become strollers?*—Their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways. — i. e. *to have remained in a settled theatre, was the more honourable as well as the more lucrative situation.* To this, Rosenkrantz replies,—*Their inhibition comes by means of the late innovation.*—i. e. *their permission to act any longer at an established house is taken away, in consequence of the NEW CUSTOM of introducing personal abuse into their comedies.* Several companies of actors in the time of our author were silenced on account of this licentious practice. Among these (as appears from a passage in *Have with you to Saffron Walden, or Gabriel Harvey's Hunt is up, &c.* 1596,) even the children of St. Paul's: "Troth, would he might for mee (that's all the harme I wish him) for then we neede never wishe the playes at Powles up againe," &c. See a dialogue between *Comedy* and *Envy* at the conclusion of *Mucedorus*, 1598, as well as the prelude to *Aristippus, or the Jovial Philosopher*, 1630, from whence the following passage is taken: "Shews having been long intermitted and forbidden by authority, for their abuses, could not be raised but by conjuring." *Shew* enters, whipped by two furies, and the prologue says to her:

" — with tears wash off that guilty sin,
 " Purge out those ill-digested dregs of wit,
 " That use their ink to blot a spotless name:
 " Let's have no one particular man traduc'd,—
 " — spare the persons," &c.

Alteration therefore in the order of the words seems to be quite unnecessary. STEEVENS.

There will still, however, remain some difficulty. The statute 39 Eliz. ch. 4. which seems to be alluded to by the words—*their inhibition*, was not made to inhibit the players from acting any longer at an *established theatre*, but to prohibit them from *strolling*. "All fencers, (says the act) bearwards, common players of enterludes, and minstrels, wandering abroad, (other than players of enterludes, belonging to any baron of this realm or any other honourable personage of greater degree, to be authorized to play under the hand and seal of arms of such baron or personage,) shall be taken, adjudged, and deemed, rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars,

Ros. No, indeed, they are not.

[HAM. How comes it?⁵ Do they grow rusty?

Ros. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: But there is, fir, an aiery of children,⁶ little

and shall sustain such pain and punishments as by this act is in that behalf appointed."

This statute, if alluded to, is repugnant to Dr. Johnson's transposition of the text, and to Mr. Steevens's explanation of it as it now stands. Yet Mr. Steevens's explanation may be right: Shakspeare might not have thought of the act of Elizabeth. He could not, however, mean to charge his friends the *old tragedians* with the *new custom* of introducing personal abuse; but must rather have meant, that the old tragedians were inhibited from performing in the city, and obliged to travel, on account of the misconduct of the younger company. See n. 6. MALONE.

By the late *innovation*, it is probable that Rosencrantz means the late change of government. The word *innovation* is used in the same sense in *The Triumph of Love*, in Fletcher's *Four moral representations in one*, where Cornelia says to Rinaldo:

" ———— and in poor habits clad,

" (You fled, and the *innovation* laid aside)."

And in Fletcher's [Shirley's] play of *The Coronation*, after Leonatus is proclaimed king, Lyfander says to Philocles:

" What dost thou think of this *innovation*?" M. MASON.

⁵ [Ham. *How comes it?* &c.] The lines enclosed in crotchets are in the folio of 1623, but not in any of the quartos. JOHNSON.

⁶ ——— *an aiery of children*, &c.] Relating to the play houses then contending, the *Bankside*, the *Fortune*, &c. played by the children of his majesty's chapel. POPE.

It relates to the young singing men of the chapel royal, or St. Paul's, of the former of whom perhaps the earliest mention occurs in an anonymous puritanical pamphlet, 1569, entitled *The Children of the Chapel stript and whipt*: "Plaies will neuer be supprest, while her maiesties unfledged minions flaunt it in silkes and sattens. They had as well be at their popish seruice in the deuils garments," &c.—Again, *ibid*: "Euen in her maiesties chapel do these pretty upstart youthes profane the Lordes day by the lasciuious writhing of their tender limbes, and gorgeous decking of their apparell, in feigning bawdie fables gathered from the idolatrous heathen poets," &c.

Concerning the performances and success of the latter in attracting the best company, I also find the following passage in *Jack Drum's Entertainment, or Pasquil and Katherine*, 1611:

eyases, that cry out on the top of question,⁷ and are most tyrannically clapp'd for't: these are now the

" I saw the *children of Powles* last night;
 " And troth they pleas'd me pretty, pretty well,
 " The apes, in time, will do it handsomely.
 " — I like the audience that frequenteth there
 " With *much applause*: a man shall not be choak'd
 " With the stench of garlick, nor be pasted
 " To the barmy jacket of a beer-brewer.
 " — 'Tis a good *gentle audience*," &c.

It is said in Richard Flecknoe's *Short Discourse of the English Stage*, 1664, that, " both the children of the chappel and St. Paul's, acted playes, the one in White-Friers, the other behinde the Convocation-house in Paul's; till people growing more precise, and playes more licentious, the theatre of Paul's was quite supprest, and that of the children of the chappel converted to the use of the children of the revels." STEEVENS.

The suppression to which Flecknoe alludes took place in the year 1583-4; but afterwards both the children of the chapel and of the Revels played at our author's playhouse in Blackfriars, and elsewhere: and the choir-boys of St. Paul's at their own house. See the *Account of our old Theatres* in Vol. III. A certain number of the children of the Revels, I believe, belonged to each of the principal theatres.

Our author cannot be supposed to direct any satire at those young men who played occasionally at his own theatre. Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, and his *Poetaster*, were performed there by the children of Queen Elizabeth's chapel, in 1600 and 1601; and *Eastward Hoe* by the children of the revels, in 1604 or 1605. I have no doubt therefore that the dialogue before us was pointed at the choir-boys of St. Paul's, who in 1601 acted two of Marston's plays, *Antonio and Mellida*, and *Antonio's Revenge*. Many of Lyly's plays were represented by them about the same time; and in 1607 Chapman's *Buffy d'Ambois* was performed by them with great applause. It was probably in this and some other noisy tragedies of the same kind, that they cry'd out on the top of question, and were most tyrannically clapp'd for't.

At a later period indeed, after our poet's death, the *Children of the Revels* had an established theatre of their own, and some dispute seems to have arisen between them and the king's company. They performed regularly in 1623, and for eight years afterwards, at the Red Bull in St. John's Street; and in 1627, Shakspeare's company obtained an inhibition from the Master of the Revels to prevent their performing any of his plays at their house: as appears

fashion; and so berattle the common stages, (so they call them) that many, wearing rapiers, are

from the following entry in Sir Henry Herbert's Office-book, already mentioned: "From Mr. Heminge, in their company's name, to forbid the playinge of any of Shakspeare's playes to the Red-Bull company, this 11th of Aprill, 1627,—5 o o." From other passages in the same book, it appears that the Children of the Revels composed the Red-Bull company.

We learn from Heywood's *Apology for Actors*, that the little *eyases* here mentioned were the persons who were guilty of the *late innovation*, or practice of introducing personal abuse on the stage; and perhaps for their particular fault the players in general suffered; and the older and more decent comedians, as well as the children, had on some recent occasion been *inhibited* from acting in London, and compelled to turn strollers. This supposition will make the words concerning which a difficulty has been stated, (see n. 5.) perfectly clear. Heywood's *Apology for Actors* was published in 1612; the passage therefore which is found in the folio, and not in the quarto, was probably added not very long before that time.

"Now to speake (says Heywood,) of some abuse *lately crept* into the quality, as an *inveighing against the state, the court, the law, the citty, and their governments, with the particularizing of private mens humours, yet alive, noblemen and others*, I know it distastes many; neither do I any way approve it, nor dare I by any means excuse it. The liberty which some arrogate to themselves, committing their bitterness and liberal invectives against all estates *to the mouthes of children*, supposing their juniority to be a priviledge for any rayling, be it never so violent, I could advise all such to curbe, and limit this presumed liberty within the bands of discretion and government. But wise and judicial censurers before whom such complaints shall at any time hereafter come, will not, I hope, impute these abuses to any transgression in us, who have ever been carefull and provident to shun the like."

Prynne in his *Histrionastix*, speaking of the state of the stage, about the year 1620, has this passage: "Not to particularise those late new scandalous invective playes, wherein sundry persons of place and eminence [Gundemore, the late lord admiral, lord treasurer, and others,] have been particularly personated, jeared, abused in a gross and scurrilous manner," &c.

The folio, 1623, has—*berattled*. The correction was made by the editor of the second folio.

Since this note was written, I have met with a passage in a letter from Mr. Samuel Calvert to Mr. Winwood, dated March 28, 1605,

afraid of goose quills, and dare scarce come thither.

HAM. What, are they children? Who maintains them? how are they escoted?⁸ Will they pursue

which might lead us to suppose that the words found only in the folio were added at that time:

“ The plays do not forbear to present upon the stage the whole course of this present time, not sparing the king, state, or religion, in so great absurdity, and with such liberty, that any would be afraid to hear them. *Memorials*, Vol. II. p. 54. MALONE.

⁷ — little eyases, that cry out on the top of question,] Little eyases; i. e. young nestlings, creatures just out of the egg.

THEOBALD.

The Booke of Haukyng, &c. bl. 1. no date, seems to offer another etymology. “ And so bycause the best knowledge is by the eye, they be called *eyessed*. Ye may also know an *eyesse* by the paleness of the feres of her legges, or the fere over the beake.”

STEEVENS.

From *ey*, Teut. ovum, q. d. qui recens ex ovo emerfit. Skinner, *Etymol.* An *aiery* or *eyrie*, as it ought rather to be written, is derived from the same root, and signifies both a young brood of hawks, and the nest itself in which they are produced.

An *eyas* hawk is sometimes written a *nyas* hawk, perhaps from a corruption that has happened in many words in our language, from the latter *n* passing from the end of one word to the beginning of another. However, some etymologists think *nyas* a legitimate word. MALONE.

— cry out on the top of question,] The meaning seems to be, they ask a common question in the highest note of the voice.

JOHNSON.

I believe *question*, in this place, as in many others, signifies conversation, dialogue. So, in *The Merchant of Venice*: “ Think, you question with a Jew.” The meaning of the passage may therefore be—*Children that perpetually recite in the highest notes of voice that can be uttered.* STEEVENS.

When we ask a *question*, we generally end the sentence with a high note. I believe, therefore, that what Rosencrantz means to say is, that these children declaim, through the whole of their parts, in the high note commonly used at the end of a question, and are applauded for it. M. MALONE.

⁸ — escoted?] Paid, From the French *escot*, a shot or reckoning. JOHNSON.

the quality no longer than they can sing?⁹ will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players, (as it is most like,² if their means are no better,) their writers do them wrong,³ to make them exclaim against their own succession?

ROS. 'Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin, to tarre them on to controversy:⁴ there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

HAM. Is it possible?

⁹ *Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing?*] Will they follow the *profession* of players no longer than they keep the voices of boys, and sing in the choir? So afterwards he says to the player, *Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.* JOHNSON.

So, in the players' *Dedication*, prefixed to the first edition of Fletcher's plays in folio, 1647: "—directed by the example of some who once steered in our *quality*, and so fortunately aspired to chuse your honour, joined with your now glorified brother, patrons to the flowing compositions of the then expired sweet swan of Avon, Shakspeare." Again, in Goffon's *School of Abuse*, 1579: "I speak not of this, as though every one [of the players] that professeth the *qualitie*, so abused himself,—"

"Than they can *sing*," does not merely mean, "than they keep the voices of boys," but is to be understood literally. He is speaking of the choir-boys of St. Paul's. MALONE.

² — *most like*,] The old copy reads—*like most*. STEEVENS.

The correction was made by Mr. Pope. MALONE.

³ — *their writers do them wrong, &c.*] I should have been very much surprised if I had not found Ben Jonson among the writers here alluded to. STEEVENS.

⁴ — *to tarre them on to controversy*:] To provoke any animal to rage, is *to tarre him*. The word is said to come from the Greek *ταράσσω*. JOHNSON.

So, already in *King John*:

"—Like a dog, that is compell'd to fight,

"Snatch at his master that doth *tarre* him on."

STEEVENS.

GUIL. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

HAM. Do the boys carry it away?

ROS. Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.⁵]

HAM. It is not very strange: for my uncle⁶ is king of Denmark; and those, that would make mouths at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats a-piece, for his picture in little.⁷ 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

[*Flourish of trumpets within.*

GUIL. There are the players.

⁵ ——— Hercules and his load too.] i. e. they not only carry away the world, but the world-bearer too: alluding to the story of Hercules's relieving Atlas. This is humorous. WARBURTON.

The allusion may be to the *Globe* playhouse on the Bankside, the sign of which was *Hercules carrying the Globe*. STEEVENS.

I suppose Shakspeare meant, that the boys drew greater audiences than the elder players of the *Globe* theatre. MALONE.

⁶ *It is not very strange: for my uncle —*] I do not wonder that the new players have so suddenly risen to reputation, my uncle supplies another example of the facility with which honour is conferred upon new claimants. JOHNSON.

It is not very strange: &c. was originally Hamlet's observation, on being informed that the old tragedians of the city were not so followed as they used to be: [see p. 124, n. 5.] but Dr. Johnson's explanation is certainly just, and this passage connects sufficiently well with that which now immediately precedes it. MALONE.

⁷ ——— *in little.*] i. e. in miniature. So, in *The Noble Soldier*, 1634:

“The perfection of all Spaniards, Mars *in little*.”

Again, in Drayton's *Shepherd's Sirena*:

“Paradise *in little* done.”

Again, in Massinger's *New Way to pay old Debts*:

“His father's picture *in little*.” STEEVENS.

HAM. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elfinore. Your hands. Come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with you in this garb;⁸ lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but my uncle-father, and aunt-mother, are deceived.

GUIL. In what, my dear lord?

HAM. I am but mad north-north west: when the wind is southerly,⁹ I know a hawk from a handsaw.²

⁸ — *let me comply &c.*] Sir T. Hanmer reads,—*let me compliment with you.* JOHNSON.

To *comply* is again apparently used in the sense of—to *compliment*, in A & V: “He did *comply* with his dug, before he suck’d it.”

STEEVENS.

⁹ — *when the wind is southerly, &c.*] So, in *Damon and Pythias*, 1582:

“But I perceive now, either the winde is at the south,
“Or else your tunge cleaveth to the rooffe of your mouth.”

STEEVENS.

² — *I know a hawk from a handsaw.*] This was a common proverbial speech. The Oxford editor alters it to,—*I know a hawk from an hereshaw*, as if the other had been a corruption of the players; whereas the poet found the proverb thus corrupted in the mouths of the people; so that the critick’s alteration only serves to shew us the original of the expression. WARBURTON.

Similarity of sound is the source of many literary corruptions. In Holborn we have still the sign of the *Bull and Gate*, which exhibits but an odd combination of images. It was originally (as I learn from the title-page of an old play) the *Boulogne Gate*, i. e. one of the gates of *Boulogne*; designed perhaps as a compliment to Henry VIII. who took the place in 1544.

The *Boulogne mouth*, now the *Bull and Mouth*, had probably the same origin, i. e. the *mouth of the harbour of Boulogne*.

STEEVENS.

The *Boulogne Gate* was not one of the gates of *Boulogne*, but of *Calais*; and is frequently mentioned as such by Hall and Holinshed. RITSON.

Enter POLONIUS.

POL. Well be with you, gentlemen!

HAM. Hark you, Guildenstern;—and you too;—
at each ear a hearer: that great baby, you see there,
is not yet out of his fwadling-clouts.

ROS. Hapily, he's the second time come to
them; for, they say, an old man is twice a child.

HAM. I will prophecy, he comes to tell me of the
players; mark it,—You say right, sir: o'monday
morning; 'twas then, indeed.

POL. My lord, I have news to tell you.

HAM. My lord, I have news to tell you. When
Roscius was an actor in Rome,—

POL. The actors are come hither, my lord.

HAM. Buz, buz!³

³ *Buz, buz!*] Mere idle talk, the *buz* of the vulgar.

JOHNSON.
Buz, buz! are, I believe, only interjections employed to in-
terrupt Polonius. Ben Jonson uses them often for the same pur-
pose, as well as Middleton in *A Mad World, my Masters*, 1608.

STEEVENS.
Buz used to be an interjection at Oxford, when any one began
a story that was generally known before. BLACKSTONE.

Buzzer, in a subsequent scene in this play, is used for a *busy*
talker:

“ And wants not buzzers, to infect his ear

“ With pestilent speeches.”

Again, in *King Lear*:

“ — on every dream,

“ Each *buz*, each fancy.”

Again, in Truffel's *History of England*, 1635: “ — who,
instead of giving redress, suspecting now the truth of the duke of
Glocester's *buzz*,” &c.

It is, therefore, probable from the answer of Polonius, that *buz*
was used, as Dr. Johnson supposes, for an idle rumour without any
foundation.

POL. Upon my honour,——

HAM. *Then came each actor on his ass,*⁴——

POL. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, [tragical-historical,⁵ tragical-comical, historical-pastoral,] scene individable, or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light.⁶ For the law of writ, and the liberty, these are the only men.⁷

In Ben Jonson's *Staple of News*, the collector of mercantile intelligence is called *Emissary Buz*. MALONE.

Whatever may be the origin of this phrase, or rather of this interjection, it is not unusual, even at this day, to cry *buz* to any person who begins to relate what the company had heard before.

M. MASON.

⁴ *Then came &c.*] This seems to be a line of a ballad.

JOHNSON.

⁵ —— *tragical-historical, &c.*] The words within the crotchets I have recovered from the folio, and see no reason why they were hitherto omitted. There are many plays of the age, if not of Shakspeare, that answer to these descriptions. STEEVENS.

⁶ —— *Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light.*] The tragedies of Seneca were translated into English by Thomas Newton, and others, and published first separate, at different times, and afterwards all together in 1581. One comedy of Plautus, viz. the *Menæchmi*, was likewise translated and published in 1595.

STEEVENS.

I believe the frequency of plays performed at publick schools, suggested to Shakspeare the names of *Seneca* and *Plautus* as dramatick authors. T. WARTON.

⁷ *For the law of writ, and the liberty, these are the only men.*] All the modern editions have,—*the law of wit, and the liberty*; but both my old copies have—*the law of writ*, I believe rightly. *Writ*, for *writing, composition*. *Wit* was not, in our author's time, taken either for *imagination*, or *acuteness*, or *both together*, but for *understanding*, for the faculty by which we *apprehend and judge*. Those who wrote of the human mind, distinguished its primary powers into *wit* and *will*. Ascham distinguishes *boys* of *tardy* and of *active* faculties into *quick wits* and *slow wits*. JOHNSON.

HAM. *O Jephtha, judge of Israel*,—what a treasure hadst thou!

POL. What a treasure had he, my lord?

MAR. Why—*One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well.*

POL. Still on my daughter. [Aside.

HAM. Am I not i'the right, old Jephtha?

POL. If you call me Jephtha, my lord, I have a daughter, that I love passing well.

HAM. Nay, that follows not.

POL. What follows then, my lord?

HAM. Why, *As by lot, God wot*,⁸ and then, you

That *writ* is here used for *writing*, may be proved by the following passage in *Titus Andronicus*:

“Then all too late I bring this fatal *writ*.” STEEVENS.

The old copies are certainly right. *Writ* is used for *writing* by authors contemporary with Shakspeare. Thus, in *The apologie of Pierce Pennileffe*, by Thomas Nashe, 1593: “For the lowlie circumstance of his poverty before his death, and sending that miserable *writte* to his wife, it cannot be but thou liest, learned Gabriel.” Again, in Bishop Earle’s *Character of a mere dull Physician*, 1638: “Then followes a *writ* to his druggier, in a strange tongue, which he understands, though he cannot conster.

Again, in *King Henry VI. Part II*:

“Now, good my lord, let’s see the devil’s *writ*.”

MALONE.

⁸ Why, *As by lot, God wot*,—&c.] The old song from which these quotations are taken, I communicated to Dr. Percy, who has honoured it with a place in the second and third editions of his *Reliques of ancient English Poetry*. In the books belonging to the Stationers’ Company, there are two entries of this Ballad among others. “A ballet intituled the Songe of Jephthah’s doughter” &c. 1567, Vol. I. fol. 162. Again, “*Jessa Judge of Israel*,” p. 93, Vol. III. Dec. 14, 1624.

This story was also one of the favourite subjects of ancient tapestry. STEEVENS.

There is a Latin tragedy on the subject of *Jephtha*, by John

know, *I' came to pass, As most like it was,*—The first row of the pious chançon⁹ will shew you more; for look, my abridgment² comes.

Christopherson in 1546, and another by Buchanan, in 1554. A third by Du Pleffis Mornay is mentioned by Prynne in his *Histrio-mastix*. The same subject had probably been introduced on the English stage. MALONE.

⁹ ——— *the pious chançon* —] It is *pons chansons* in the first folio edition. The old ballads sung on bridges, and from thence called *Pons chansons*. Hamlet is here repeating ends of old songs.

POPE.

It is *pons chansons* in the quarto too. I know not whence the *rubrick* has been brought, yet it has not the appearance of an arbitrary addition. The titles of old ballads were never printed red; but perhaps *rubrick* may stand for *marginal explanation*.

JOHNSON.

There are five large volumes of ballads in Mr. Pepys's collection in Magdalen College library, Cambridge, some as ancient as Henry VII's reign, and not one red letter upon any one of the titles. GREY.

The words, *of the rubrick* were first inserted by Mr. Rowe, in his edition in 1709. The old quartos in 1604, 1605, and 1611, read *pious chançon*, which gives the sense wanted, and I have accordingly inserted it in the text.

The *pious chansons* were a kind of *Christmas carols*, containing some scriptural history thrown into loose rhymes, and sung about the streets by the common people when they went at that season to solicit alms. Hamlet is here repeating some scraps from a song of this kind, and when Polonius enquires what follows them, he refers him to the *first row* (i. e. division) of one of these, to obtain the information he wanted. STEEVENS.

² ——— *my abridgment* —] He calls the players afterwards, *the brief chronicles of the times*; but I think he now means only *those who will shorten my talk*. JOHNSON.

An *abridgment* is used for a dramattick piece in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, A&V. sc. i:

“ Say what *abridgment* have you for this evening ? ”
but it does not commodiously apply to this passage. See Vol. VII. p. 142, n. 4. STEEVENS.

Enter four or five Players.

You are welcome, masters; welcome all:—I am glad to see thee well:—welcome, good friends.—O, old friend! Why, thy face is valanced³ since I saw thee last; Com'st thou to beard me⁴ in Denmark?—What! my young lady and mistress! By-'r-lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven, than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine.⁵ Pray

³ —— *thy face is valanced* —] i. e. fringed with a beard. The valance is the fringes or drapery hanging round the tester of a bed.

MALONE.

Dryden in one of his prologues or epilogues has the following line:

“ Criticks in plume, and white *valancy* wig.” STEEVENS.

The folios read *valiant*, which seems right. The comedian was probably “ bearded like the pard.” RITSON.

⁴ —— *to beard me* —] *To beard*, anciently signified to *set at defiance*. So, in *King Henry IV.* P. I:

“ No man so potent breathes upon the ground,

“ But I will *beard* him.” STEEVENS.

⁵ —— *by the altitude of a chopine*.] A *chioppine* is a high shoe, or rather, a clog, worn by the Italians, as in Tho. Heywood's *Challenge of Beauty*, Act V. Song:

“ The Italian in her high *chopeene*,

“ Scotch lass, and lovely free too;

“ The Spanish Donna, French Madame,

“ He doth not feare to go to.”

So, in Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*:

“ I do wish myself one of his mistress's *cioppini*.” Another demands, why would he be one of his mistress's *cioppini*? a third answers, “ because he would make her *higher*.”

Again, in Decker's *Match me in London*, 1631: “ I'm only taking instructions to make her a lower *chopeene*; she finds fault that she's lifted too high.”

Again, in Chapman's *Cæsar and Pompey*, 1613:

“ ————— and thou shalt

“ Have *chopines* at commandement to an height

“ Of life thou canst with.”

God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold,
be not crack'd within the ring.⁵—Masters, you are

See the figure of a Venetian courtezan among the *Habiti Antichi &c. di Cesare Vecellio*, p. 114, edit. 1598: and (as Mr. Ruffon observes) among the *Diversarum Nationum Habitus*, Padua, 1592.

STEEVENS:

Tom Coryat in his *Crudities*, 1611, p. 262, calls them *chapineys*, and gives the following account of them: "There is one thing used of the Venetian women, and some others dwelling in the cities and townes subject to the signiory of Venice, that is not to be observed (I thinke) amongst any other women in Christendome: which is so common in Venice, that no woman whatsoever goeth without it, either in her house or abroad, a thing made of wood and covered with leather of sundry colors, some with white, some redde, some yellow. It is called a chapiney, which they wear under their shoes. Many of them are curiously painted; some also of them I have seen fairely gilt: so uncomely a thing. (in my opinion) that it is pittie this foolish custom is not cleane banished and exterminated out of the citie. There are many of these chapineys of a great height even half a yard high, which maketh many of their women that are very short, seeme much taller than the tallest women we have in England. Also I have heard it observed among them, that by how much the nobler a woman is, by so much the higher are her chapineys. All their gentlewomen and most of their wives and widowes that are of any wealth, are assisted and supported eyther by men or women, when they walke abroad, to the end they may not fall. They are borne up most commonly by the left arme, otherwise they might quickly take a fall." REED.

Again, in Marston's *Dutch Courtezan*, 1605: "Dost not weare high corked shoes, chopines?"

The word ought rather to be written *chapine*, from *chapin*, Span. which is defined by Minshew in his Spanish Dictionary, "a high cork shoe." There is no synonymous word in the Italian language, though the *Venetian* ladies, as we are told by Laffels, "wear high heel'd shoes, like stilts," &c. MALONE.

⁵ — be not crack'd within the ring.] That is, crack'd too much for use. This is said to a young player who acted the parts of women. JOHNSON.

I find the same phrase in *The Captain*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

"Come to be married to my lady's woman,

"After she's crack'd in the ring."

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Magnetick Lady*:

"Light gold, and crack'd within the ring."

all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers,⁶ fly at any thing we see: We'll have a speech straight; Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

1. PLAY. What speech, my lord?

HAM. I heard thee speak me a speech once,—but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once: for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general:⁷ but it was

Again, in *Ram-Alley, or Merry Tricks*, 1611:

“ — not a penny the worse

“ For a little use, *whole within the ring*.”

Again, in Decker's *Honest Whore*, 1635: “ You will not let my oaths be *crack'd in the ring*, will you?” STEEVENS.

The following passage in Lyly's *Woman in the Moon*, 1597, as well as that in Fletcher's *Captain*, might lead us to suppose that this phrase sometimes conveyed a wanton allusion: “ Well, if she were twenty grains lighter, refuse her, provided always she be not *clipt within the ring*.” T. C.

⁶ — like French falconers,] The amusement of falconry was much cultivated in France. In *All's well that ends well*, Shakspeare has introduced an *astringer* or falconer at the French court. Mr. Tollet, who has mentioned the same circumstance, likewise adds that it is said in *Sir Thomas Browne's Travels*, p. 116, that “ the French seem to have been the first and noblest falconers in the western part of Europe;” and, that the French king sent over his falconers to show that sport to king James the First.” See Weldon's *Court of King James*. STEEVENS.

— like French falconers,] Thus the folio. Quarto:—like friendly falconers. MALONE.

⁷ — caviare to the general:] Giles Fletcher in his *Russe Commonwealth*, 1591, p. 11, says in Russia they have divers kinds of fish “ very good and delicate: as the Bellonga & Bellongina of four or five elnes long, the Ostrina & Sturgeon, but not so thick nor long. These four kind of fish breed in the Wolgha and are catched in great plenty, and served thence into the whole realme for a good food. Of the roes of these four kinds they make very great store of leary or *Caveary*.” See also Mr. Risson's *Remarks &c.* on Shakspeare, (edit. 1778,) p. 199. REED.

Ben Jonson has ridiculed the introduction of these foreign deli-

(as I received it, and others, whose judgements, in such matters, cried in the top of mine,⁸) an excellent play; well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty⁹ as cunning. I remember, one said, there were no fallets^a in the lines, to

cacies in his *Cynthia's Revels*: "He doth learn to eat Anchovies, Macaroni, Bovoli, Fagioli, and *Caviare*," &c.

Again, in *The Muses' Looking Glass*, by Randolph, 1638:

"—— the pleasure that I take in spending it,

" To feed on *caviare*, and eat anchovies."

Again, in *The White Devil, or Vittoria Corombona*, 1612:

" ————— one citizen

" Is lord of two fair manors that call'd you master,

" Only for *caviare*."

Again, in Marston's *What you will*, 1607:

" —— a man can scarce eat good meat,

" Anchovies, *caviare*, but he's fatired." STEEVENS.

Florio in his Italian Dictionary, 1598, defines, *Caviaro*, "a kinde of salt meat, used in Italie, like black sope; it is made of the roes of fishes."

Lord Clarendon uses *the general* for *the people*, in the same manner as it is used here. "And so by undervaluing many particulars, (which they truly esteemed,) as rather to be consented to than that *the general* should suffer,—." Book V. p. 530.

MALONE.

⁸ —— *cried in the top of mine.*] i. e. whose judgement I had the highest opinion of. WARBURTON.

I think it means only that *were higher than mine*. JOHNSON.

Whose judgement, in such matters, was in much higher vogue than mine. HEATH.

Perhaps it means only—whose judgement was more clamorously delivered than mine. We still say of a bawling actor, that he speaks *on the top of his voice*. STEEVENS.

To *over-top* is a hunting term applied to a dog when he gives more tongue than the rest of the cry. To this, I believe, Hamlet refers, and he afterwards mentions a CRY of *players*. HENLEY.

⁹ —— *set down with as much modesty—*] *Modesty for simplicity*. WARBURTON.

^a —— *there were no fallets &c.*] Such is the reading of the old copies, I know not why the later editors continued to adopt the alteration of Mr. Pope, and read,—no *salt*, &c.

make the matter savoury; nor no matter in the phrase, that might indite the author of affection:³ but call'd it, an honest method,⁴ as wholesome⁵ as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter: If it live in your memory, begin at this line; let me see, let me see;—

*The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,*⁶ — 'tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus.

Mr. Pope's alteration may indeed be in some degree supported by the following passage in Decker's *Satiromastix*, 1602: "—a prepar'd troop of gallants, who shall distaste every *unsalted* line in their fly-blown comedies." Though the other phrase was used as late as in the year 1665, in *A Banquet of Jests*, &c. "— for junkets, joci; and for curious *fallets*, sales." STEEVENS.

³ — indite the author of affection:] Indite, for convict.

WARBURTON.

— indite the author of affection:] i. e. convict the author of being a fantastical *affected* writer. Maria calls Malvolio an *affection'd* ass, i. e. an *affected* ass; and in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Nathaniel tells the Pedant, that his reasons "have been witty, without affection."

Again, in the translation of *Castiglione's Courtier*, by Hobby, 1556: "Among the chiefe conditions and qualitiyes in a waiting-gentlewoman," is, "to flee *affection* or curiosity."

Again, in Chapman's Preface to *Ovid's Banquet of Sense*, 1595: "Obscuritie in *affection* of words and indigested concets, is pedanticall and childish." STEEVENS.

⁴ — but call'd it, an honest method,] Hamlet is telling how much his judgement differed from that of others. One said, there was no *fallets* in the lines, &c. but called it an honest method. The author probably gave it,—But I called it an honest method, &c.

JOHNSON.

— an honest method,] Honest, for chaste. WARBURTON.

⁵ — as wholesome &c.] This passage was recovered from the quartos by Dr. Johnson. STEEVENS.

"Fabula nullius veneris, morataque recte." M. MASON.

⁶ *The rugged Pyrrhus*, &c.] Mr. Malone once observed to me, that Mr. Capell supposed the speech uttered by the *Player* before *Hamlet*, to have been taken from an ancient drama, entitled "*Dido*

*The rugged Pyrrhus,—he, whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble*

Queen of Carthage." I had not then the means of justifying or confuting his remark, the piece alluded to having escaped the hands of the most liberal and industrious collectors of such curiosities. Since, however, I have met with this performance, and am therefore at liberty to pronounce that it did not furnish our author with more than a general hint for his description of the death of Priam, &c.; unless with reference to

" — the whiff and *wind* of his fell sword

" The unnerved father falls.——"

we read, ver. *:

" And with the *wind* thereof the king fell down; "
and can make out a resemblance between

" So as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood; "
and ver. **::

" So leaning on his sword, he stood stone still."

The greater part of the following lines are surely more ridiculous in themselves, than even Shakspeare's happiest vein of burlesque or parody could have made them:

" At last came *Pirrh*us fell and full of ire,

" His harnesse dropping bloud, and on his speare

" The mangled head of *Priams* yongest sonne;

" And after him his band of Mirmidons,

" With balles of wild-fire in their murdering pawes,

" Which made the funerall flame that burnt faire *Troy*;

" All which hemd me about, crying, this is he.

" *Dido*. Ah, how could poor *Æneas* scape their hands?

" *Æn*. My mother *Venus*, jealous of my health,

" Convaide me from their crooked nets and bands:

" So I escapt the furious *Pirrh*us wrath,

" Who then ran to the pallace of the King,

" And at *Jove's* Altar finding *Priamus*,

" About whose witherd neck hung *Hecuba*,

" Foulding his hand in hers, and joyntly both

" Beating their breasts and falling on the ground,

" He with his faulchions point raisde up at once;

" And with *Megeras* eyes flared in their face,

" Threatning a thousand deaths at every glauce.

" To whom the aged king thus trembling spoke: &c.—

" Not mov'd at all, but smiling at his teares,

" This butcher, whil'st his hands were yet held up,

" Treading upon his breast, stroke off his hands.

" *Dido*. O end, *Æneas*, I can hear no more.

*When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
With heraldry more dismal; head to foot
Now is he total gules;⁷ horridly trick'd⁸*

- “ *Æn.* At which the franticke queene leapt on his face,
“ And in his eyelids hanging by the nayles,
“ A little while prolong'd her husband's life:
“ At last the souldiers puld her by the heeles,
“ And swong her howling in the emptie ayre,
“ Which sent an echo to the wounded king:
“ Whereat he lifted up his bedred lims,
“ And would have grappeld with Achilles sonne,
“ Forgetting both his want of strength and hands;
“ Which he disdaining, whist his sword about,
* “ And with the wound thereof the king fell downe:
“ Then from the navell to the throat at once,
“ He ript old Priam; at whose latter gaspe
“ Jove's marble statue gan to bend the brow,
“ As lothing Pirrhus for this wicked act:
“ Yet he undaunted tooke his fathers flagge,
“ And dipt it in the old kings chill cold bloud,
“ And then in triumph ran into the streetes,
“ Through which he could not passe for slaughtred men;
** “ So leaning on his sword he stood stone still,
“ Viewing the fire wherewith rich Ilion burnt.” A& II.

The exact title of the play from which these lines are copied, is as follows: The—Tragedie of Dido | *Queen of Carthage* | Played by the Children of her | *Majesties Chappel.* | Written by Christopher Marlowe, and | *Thomas Nash, Gent.* | —Actors | *Jupiter.* | *Ganimed.* | *Venus.* | *Cupid.* | *Juno.* | *Mercurie, or—Hermes,* | *Æneas.* | *Ascanius.* | *Dido.* | *Anna.* | *Achates.* | *Ilioneus.* | *Iarbas.* | *Cloanthus.* | *Sergestus.* | At London, | Printed, by the Widdowe Crwin, for Thomas Woodcocke, and | are to be solde at his shop, in Paules Churchyard, at | the signe of the black Beare. 1594. | STEEVENS.

⁷ *Now is he total gules;* | *Gules* is a term in the barbarous jargon peculiar to heraldry, and signifies *red*. Shakspeare has it again in *Timon of Athens*:

“ With man's blood paint the ground; *gules, gules.*”

Heywood in his *Second Part of the Iron Age*, has made a verb from it:

“ — old Hecuba's reverend locks

“ Be *gul'd* in slaughter—.” STEEVENS.

⁸ — *trick'd* —] i. e. smeared, painted. An heraldick term. See Vol. IX. p. 13, n. 2. MALONE.

*With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons ;
 Bak'd and impasted with the parching streets,
 That lend a tyrannous and a damned light
 To their lord's murder: Roasted in wrath, and fire,
 And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
 With eyes like carbuncles,⁹ the hellish Pyrrhus
 Old grandfire Priam seeks,—So proceed you.²*

POL. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken; with good accent, and good discretion.

1. PLAY. *Anon he finds him*

*Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
 Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
 Repugnant to command: Unequal match'd,
 Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage, strikes wide;
 But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
 The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium
 Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
 Stoops to his base; and with a hideous crash
 Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword
 Which was declining on the milky head
 Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:
 So, as a painted tyrant,³ Pyrrhus stood;
 And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
 Did nothing.*

*But, as we often see, against some storm,
 A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
 The bold winds speechless, and the orb below*

⁹ *With eyes like carbuncles,]* So, in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, B. IX. l. 500:

“ ——— and carbuncles his eyes.” STEEVENS.

² *So proceed you.]* These words are not in the folio.

MALONE.

³ ——— *as a painted tyrant,]* Shakspeare was probably here thinking of the tremendous personages often represented in old tapestry, whose uplifted swords *stick in the air, and do nothing.*

MALONE.

*As hush as death:*⁴ anon, the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region: So, after Pyrrhus' pause,
A roused vengeance sets him new a work;
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armour,⁵ forg'd for proof eterne,
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.—

Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power;
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends.

POL. This is too long.

HAM. It shall to the barber's, with your beard.—
Pr'ythee, say on:—He's for a jig, or a tale of baw-
dry,⁶ or he sleeps:—say on: come to Hecuba.

⁴ — as we often see, against some storm,——

The bold winds speechless, and the orb below

As hush as death:] So, in Venus and Adonis:

“Even as the wind is hush'd before it raineth.”

This line leads me to suspect that Shakspeare wrote—the bold wind speechless. Many similar mistakes have happened in these plays, where the word ends with the same letter with which the next begins. MALONE.

⁵ *And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall*

On Mars's armour, &c.] This thought appears to have been adopted from the 3d Book of Sidney's *Arcadia*: “Vulcan, when he wrought at his wife's request Æneas an armour, made not his hammer beget a greater sound than the swords of these noble knights did” &c. STEEVENS.

⁶ — *He's for a jig, or a tale of bawdry,]* See note on “—your only jig-maker,” A& III. sc. ii. STEEVENS.

A jig, in our poet's time, signified a ludicrous metrical composition, as well as a dance. Here it is used in the former sense. So in Florio's *Italian Dict.* 1598: “Frottola, a countrie jig, or round, or countrie song, or wanton verses. See *The Historical Account of the English Stage*, &c. Vol. III. MALONE.

1. PLAY. *But who, ah woe!*⁷ *had seen the mobled queen*⁸——

HAM. The mobled queen?

POL. That's good? mobled queen is good.

1. PLAY. *Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames*

⁷ *But who, ah woe!*] Thus the quarto, except that it has—*a woe*. *A* is printed instead of *ah* in various places in the old copies. *Woe* was formerly used adjectively for *woeful*. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“Woe, woe are we, fir, you may not live to wear

“All your true followers out.”

The folio reads—*But who, O who, &c.* MALONE.

⁸ —— *the mobled queen* ——] *Mobled* or *mabled* signifies *veiled*. So, Sandys speaking of the Turkish women, says, *their heads and faces are mabled in fine linen, that no more is to be seen of them than their eyes.* Travels. WARBURTON.

Mobled signifies *huddled, grossly covered.* JOHNSON.

I meet with this word in Shirley's *Gentleman of Venice*:

“The moon does *mobble* up herself.” FARMER.

Mobled, is, I believe, no more than a deprivation of *muffled*. It is thus corrupted in *Ogilby's Fables*, Second Part:

“*Mobbled* nine days in my confidering cap,

“Before my eyes beheld the blessed day.”

In the West this word is still used in the same sense; and that is the meaning of *mobble* in Dr. Farmer's quotation.

HOLT WHITE.

The *mabled* queen, (or *mobled* queen, as it is spelt in the quarto,) means, the queen attired in a large, coarse, and careless head-dress. A few lines lower we are told she had “a *clout* upon that head, where late the diadem stood.”

To *mab*, (which in the North is pronounced *mob*, and hence the spelling of the old copy in the present instance,) says Ray in his *Di&t. of North Country words*, is “to dress carelessly. *Mabs* are *flatterns*.”

The ordinary morning head-dress of ladies continued to be distinguished by the name of a *mab*, to almost the end of the reign of George the Second. The folio reads—the *inobled* queen.

MALONE.

In the counties of Essex and Middlesex, this morning cap has always been called—a *mob*, and not a *mab*. My spelling of the word therefore agrees with its most familiar pronunciation. STEEVENS.

*With biffon rheum ;⁹ a clout upon that head,
Where late the diadem flood ; and, for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up ;
Who this had feen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
'Gainst fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd :
But if the gods themselves did fee her then,
When ſhe ſaw Pyrrhus make malicious ſport
In mincing with his ſword her husband's limbs ;
The inſtant burſt of clamour that ſhe made,
(Unless things mortal move them not at all,)
Would have made milch² the burning eyes of hea-
ven,
And paſſion in the gods.*

POL. Look, whether he has not turn'd his colour, and has tears in's eyes.—Pr'ythee, no more.

HAM. 'Tis well ; I'll have thee ſpeak out the reſt of this ſoon.—Good my lord, will you ſee the players well beſtow'd ? Do you hear, let them be well uſed ; for they are the abſtract, and brief chronicles, of the time : After your death you were better have a bad epitaph, than their ill report while you live.

POL. My lord, I will uſe them according to their deſert.

HAM. Odd's bodikin, man, much better : Uſe every man after his deſert, and who ſhall 'ſcape whipping ? Uſe them after your own honour and

⁹ *With biffon rheum ;]* Biffon or befeſen, i. e. blind. A word ſtill in uſe in ſome parts of the North of England.

So, in *Coriolanus* : “ What harm can your *biffon* conſpectuities glean out of this character ? ” STEEVENS.

² — *made milch* —] Drayton in the 13th Song of his *Polyolbion* gives this epithet to dew : “ Exbaling the milch dew,” &c.

STEEVENS.

dignity: The less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

POL. Come, firs.

HAM. Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow — Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the murder of Gonzago?

1. PLAY. Ay, my lord.

HAM. We'll have it to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down, and insert in't? could you not?

1. PLAY. Ay, my lord.

HAM. Very well.—Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. [*Exeunt* POLONIUS and Players.] My good friends, [*To* ROS. and GUIL.] I'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elfinore.

ROS. Good my lord!

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

HAM. Ay, so, God be wi' you:—Now I am alone
O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous, that this player here,^a

^a *Is it not monstrous, that this player here,*] It should seem from the complicated nature of such parts as Hamlet, Lear, &c. that the time of Shakspeare had produced some excellent performers. He would scarce have taken the pains to form characters which he had no prospect of seeing represented with force and propriety on the stage.

His plays indeed, by their own power, must have given a different turn to acting, and almost new-created the performers of his age. Mysteries, Moralities, and Enterludes, afforded no materials for art to work on, no discriminations of character, or varieties of appropriated language. From tragedies like *Cambyfes*, *Tamburlaine*, and *Jeronymo*, nature was wholly banished; and the comedies of *Gammer Gurton*, *Common Condyceyons*, and *The Old Wives Tale*, might have had justice done to them by the lowest order of human beings.

But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
 Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
 That from her working, all his visage wann'd;³
 Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,⁴

Sanctius his animal, mentisque capacius altæ
 was wanting, when the dramas of Shakspeare made their first appearance; and to these we were certainly indebted for the excellence of actors who could never have improved so long as their sensibilities were unawakened, their memories burthened only by pedantick or puritanical declamation, and their manners vulgarized by pleasantries of as low an origin. STEEVENS.

³ — all his visage wann'd;] [The folio—*warm'd*.] This might do, did not the old quarto lead us to a more exact and pertinent reading, which is—visage *wan'd*; i. e. turned *pale* or *wan*. For so the visage appears when the mind is thus affectioned, and not *warm'd* or *flush'd*. WARBURTON.

⁴ That, from her working, all his visage wann'd;
 Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,] *Wan'd* (*wann'd* it should have been spelt,) is the reading of the quarto, which Dr. Warburton, I think rightly, restored. The folio reads *warm'd*, for which Mr. Steevens contends in the following note:

“The working of the soul, and the effort to shed tears, will give a colour to the actor's face, instead of taking it away. The visage is always *warm'd* and *flush'd* by any unusual exertion in a passionate speech; but no performer was ever yet found, I believe, whose feelings were of such exquisite sensibility as to produce paleness in any situation in which the drama could place him. But if players were indeed possessed of that power, there is no such circumstance in the speech uttered before Hamlet, as could introduce the *wanness* for which Dr. Warburton contends.”

Whether an actor can produce paleness, it is, I think, unnecessary to enquire. That Shakspeare thought he could, and considered the speech in question as likely to produce *wanness*, is proved decisively by the words which he has put into the mouth of Polonius in this scene; which add such support to the original reading, that I have without hesitation restored it. Immediately after the Player has finished his speech, Polonius exclaims,

“Look, whether he has not *turn'd his colour*, and has *tears in his eyes*.” Here we find the effort to shed tears, *taking away*, not *giving a colour*. If it be objected, that by *turn'd his colour*, Shakspeare meant that the player grew red, a passage in King

A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,⁵
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion,⁶
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,

Richard III. in which the poet is again describing an actor, who is master of his art, will at once answer the objection:

“ *Rich.* Come, cousin, can'st thou *quake*, and *change thy colour*?

“ Murder thy breath in middle of a word;

“ And then again begin, and stop again,

“ As if thou wert *distraught* and *mad with terror*?

“ *Buck.* Tut, I can counterfeit the *deep tragedian*:

“ Tremble and start at wagging of a straw,” &c.

The words, *quake*, and *terror*, and *tremble*, as well as the whole context, shew, that by “ *change thy colour*,” Shakspeare meant *grow pale*. MALONE.

The word *aspect* (as Dr. Farmer very properly observes) was in Shakspeare's time accented on the second syllable. The folio exhibits the passage as I have printed it. STEEVENS.

⁵ *What's Hecuba to him, &c.*] It is plain Shakspeare alludes to a story told of Alexander the cruel tyrant of Pherae in Thessaly, who seeing a famous tragedian act in the Troades of Euripides, was so sensibly touched that he left the theatre before the play was ended; being ashamed, as he owned, that he who never pitied those he murdered, should weep at the sufferings of *Hecuba* and *Andromache*. See Plutarch in the Life of Pelopidas. UPTON.

Shakspeare, it is highly probable, had read the life of Pelopidas, but I see no ground for supposing there is here an allusion to it. Hamlet is not ashamed of being seen to weep at a theatrical exhibition, but mortified that a player, in *a dream of passion*, should appear more agitated by fictitious sorrow, than the prince was by a real calamity. MALONE.

⁶ — *the cue for passion,*] The hint, the direction. JOHNSON.

This phrase is theatrical, and occurs at least a dozen times in our author's plays. Thus, says Quince to Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, “ You speak all your part at once, *cues* and all.” See also Vol. XIII. p. 384, n. 6. STEEVENS.

And cleave the general ear⁷ with horrid speech;
Make mad the guilty, and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant; and amaze, indeed,
The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,

A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, speak,
Like John a-dreams,⁸ unpregnant of my cause,⁹
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property, and most dear life,
A damn'd defeat was made.² Am I a coward?

⁷ ——— *the general ear* —] The ear of all mankind. So before, —
Caviare to the general, that is, to the multitude. JOHNSON.

⁸ *Like John a-dreams*,] *John a-dreams*, i. e. of dreams, means only *John* the dreamer; a nick-name, I suppose, for any ignorant silly fellow. Thus the puppet formerly thrown at during the season of Lent, was called *Jack-a-lent*, and the ignis fatuus *Jack-a-lanthorn*. *John-a-droynes* however, if not a corruption of this nick-name, seems to have been some well-known character, as I have met with more than one allusion to him. So, in *Have with you to Saffron Walden*, or *Gabriel Harvey's Hunt is up*, by Nashe, 1596: "The description of that poor *John-a-droynes* his man, whom he had hired," &c. *John-a-Droynes* is likewise a foolish character in Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578, who is seized by informers, has not much to say in his defence, and is cheated out of his money. STEEVENS.

⁹ ——— *unpregnant of my cause*,] *Unpregnant*, for having no due sense of. WARBURTON.

Rather, not quickened with a new desire of vengeance; not teeming with revenge. JOHNSON.

² *A damn'd defeat was made*.] *Defeat*, for destruction.

WARBURTON.

Rather, *dispossession*. JOHNSON.

The word *defeat*, (which certainly means *destruction* in the present instance) is very licentiously used by the old writers. Shakespeare in *Othello* employs it yet more quaintly. — "Defeat thy favour with an usurped beard;" and Middleton, in his comedy called *Any Thing for a Quiet Life*, says — "I heard of your defeat made upon a mercer."

Again, in *Revenge for Honour*, by Chapman:

"That he might meantime make a sure defeat

"On our good aged father's life."

Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i'th
throat,

As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha!

Why, I should take it: for it cannot be,
But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall
To make oppression bitter; or, ere this,
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal: Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless³ vil-
lain!

Why, what an ass am I? This is most brave;⁴
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a cursing, like a very drab,

Again, in *The Wits*, by Sir W. D'Avenant, 1637: "Not all the skill I have, can pronounce him free of *the defeat* upon my gold and jewels."

Again, in *The Isle of Gulls*, 1616: "My late shipwreck has made a *defeat* both of my friends and treasure." STEEVENS.

In the passage quoted from *Othello*, to *defeat* is used for *undo* or *alter*: *désaire*, F. See Minshew in v. Minshew considers the substantives *defeat* and *defeature* as synonymous. The former he defines an *overthrow*; the latter, *execution* or *slaughter* of men. In *King Henry V.* we have a similar phraseology:

"Making *defeat* upon the powers of France."

And the word is again used in the same sense in the last act of this play:

"—— Their *defeat*

"Doth by their own insinuation grow." MALONE.

³ —— *kindless* —] *Unnatural*. JOHNSON.

⁴ *Why, what an ass am I? This is most brave;*] The folio reads.—

"O vengeance!

"Who? what an ass am I? Sure this is most brave."

STEEVENS.

A scullion!⁵

Fie upon't! foh! About my brains!⁶ Humph! I
have heard,

That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,⁷
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul, that presently
'They have proclaim'd their malefactions:
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father,
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;
I'll tent him⁸ to the quick; if he do blench,⁹
I know my course. The spirit, that I have seen
May be a devil: and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and, perhaps,

⁵ A scullion!] Thus the folio. The quartos read,—A stallion.
STEEVENS.

⁶ — About my brains!] Wits, to your work. Brain, go about
the present business. JOHNSON.

This expression (which seems a parody on the naval one,—*about ship!*) occurs in the Second Part of the *Iron Age*, by Heywood, 1632:

“ My brain about again! for thou hast found

“ New projects now to work on.”

About, my brain! therefore, (as Mr. M. Mason observes) appears
to signify, “ be my thoughts shifted into a contrary direction.”

STEEVENS.

⁷ ————— I have heard,

That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,] A number of these stories
are collected together by Thomas Heywood, in his *Actor's Vindication*.

STEEVENS.

⁸ — tent him —] Search his wounds. JOHNSON.

⁹ — if he do blench,] If he shrink, or start. The word is used
by Fletcher, in *The Night-walker*:

“ Blench at no danger, though it be a gallows.”

Again, in Gower, *De Confessione Amantis*, Lib. VI. fol. 128:

“ Without blenshinge of mine eie.” STEEVENS.

See Vol. X. p. 38, n. 7. MALONE.

Out of my weakness, and my melancholy,
 (As he is very potent with such spirits,)
 Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds
 More relative than this:² The play's the thing,
 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

[*Exit.*]

A C T III. S C E N E I.

A Room in the Castle.

*Enter King, Queen, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSEN-
 CRANZ, and GUILDENSTERN.*

KING. And can you by no drift of conference³
 Get from him, why he puts on this confusion;
 Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
 With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

ROS. He does confess, he feels himself distracted;
 But from what cause he will by no means speak.

GUIL. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded;
 But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
 When we would bring him on to some confession
 Of his true state.

QUEEN. Did he receive you well?

ROS. Most like a gentleman.

² More relative than this:] *Relative for convictive.*

WARBURTON.

Convictive is only the consequential sense. *Relative* is nearly related,
 closely connected. JOHNSON.

³ ==— conference —] The folio reads—*circumstance.* STEEVENS.

GUIL. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Ros. Niggard of question ; but, of our demands
Most free in his reply.⁴

QUEEN. Did you assay him
To any pastime?

Ros. Madam, it so fell out, that certain players
We o'er-raught on the way :⁵ of these we told him ;
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it: They are about the court ;
And, as I think, they have already order

⁴ Niggard of question ; but, of our demands,

Most free in his reply.] This is given as the description of the conversation of a man whom the speaker found not forward to be sounded ; and who kept aloof when they would bring him to confession : but such a description can never pass but at cross-purposes. Shakspeare certainly wrote it just the other way :

Most free of question ; but, of our demands,
Niggard in his reply.

That this is the true reading, we need but turn back to the preceding scene, for Hamlet's conduct, to be satisfied.

WARBURTON.

Warburton forgets that by *question*, 'Shakspeare does not usually mean interrogatory, but *discourse* ; yet in which ever sense the word be taken, this account given by Rosencrantz agrees but ill with the scene between him and Hamlet, as actually represented.

M. MASON.

Slow to begin conversation, but free enough in his answers to our demands. Guildenstern has just said that Hamlet kept aloof when they wished to bring him to confess the cause of his distraction: Rosencrantz therefore here must mean, that up to that point, till they touch'd on that, he was free enough in his answers. MALONE.

⁵ — o'er-raught on the way:] Over-raught is over-reached, that is, over-took. JOHNSON.

So, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, Book VI. c. iii :

" Having by chance a close advantage view'd,

" He over-raught him," &c.

Again, in the 5th Book of Gawin Douglas's translation of *The Æneid* :

" War not the samyn mysfortoun me over-raucht."

STEEVENS.

This night to play before him.

POL. 'Tis most true:
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties,
To hear and see the matter.

KING. With all my heart; and it doth much
content me
To hear him so inclin'd.
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

Ros. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

KING. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too.
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither;
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here⁶
Affront Ophelia:⁷
Her father, and myself (lawful espials,⁸)
Will so bestow ourselves, that, seeing, unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge;
And gather by him, as he is behav'd,
If't be the affliction of his love, or no,
That thus he suffers for.

QUEEN. I shall obey you:

⁶ — may here —] The folio, (I suppose by an error of the press,) reads—may there—. STEEVENS.

⁷ Affront Ophelia:] To affront, is only to meet directly.

JOHNSON.

Affrontare, Ital. So, in *The Devil's Charter*, 1607:

"Affronting that port where proud Charles should enter."

Again, in sir W. D'Avenant's *Gruel Brother*, 1630:

"In sufferance affronts the winter's rage." STEEVENS.

⁸ — espials,] i. e. spies. So, in *King Henry VI.* Part I:

" — as he march'd along,

"By your espials were discovered

"Two mightier troops."

See also Vol. XIV. p. 35, n. 2.

The words — "lawful espials," are found only in the folio.

STEEVENS.

And, for your part,⁹ Ophelia, I do wish,
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness; so shall I hope, your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honours.

OPH. Madam, I wish it may.

[Exit QUEEN.

POL. Ophelia, walk you here:—Gracious, so
please you,

We will bestow ourselves:—Read on this book;

[To OPHELIA.

That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness.²—We are oft to blame in this,—
'Tis too much prov'd,³—that, with devotion's visage,
And pious action, we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

KING. O, 'tis too true! how smart

A lash that speech doth give my conscience!

The harlot's cheek, beauty'd with plastring art,

Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it,⁴

Than is my deed to my most painted word:

O heavy burden! [Aside.

POL. I hear him coming; let's withdraw, my lord.

[Exeunt King and POLONIUS.

⁹ *And, for your part,*] Thus the quarto, 1604, and the folio. The modern editors, following a quarto of no authority, read—*for my part.* MALONE.

² *Your loneliness.*] Thus the folio. The first and second quartos read *lowliness.* STEEVENS.

³ *'Tis too much prov'd,*] It is found by too frequent experience. JOHNSON.

⁴ — *more ugly to the thing that helps it,*] That is, *compared with the thing that helps it.* JOHNSON.

So, Ben Jonson:

“All that they did was piety to this.” STEEVENS.

Enter HAMLET.

HAM. To be, or not to be,⁵ that is the question:—
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer

⁵ *To be, or not to be,*] Of this celebrated soliloquy, which bursting from a man distracted with contrariety of desires, and overwhelmed with the magnitude of his own purposes, is connected rather in the speaker's mind, than on his tongue, I shall endeavour to discover the train, and to shew how one sentiment produces another.

Hamlet, knowing himself injured in the most enormous and atrocious degree, and seeing no means of redress, but such as must expose him to the extremity of hazard, meditates on his situation in this manner: *Before I can form any rational scheme of action under this pressure of distress,* it is necessary to decide, whether, *after our present state, we are to be, or not to be.* That is the question, which, as it shall be answered, will determine, *whether 'tis nobler, and more suitable to the dignity of reason, to suffer the outrages of fortune patiently, or to take arms against them, and by opposing end them, though perhaps with the loss of life.* If *to die, were to sleep, no more, and by a sleep to end the miseries of our nature,* such a sleep were devoutly to be wished; but if *to sleep in death, be to dream, to retain our powers of sensibility, we must pause to consider, in that sleep of death what dreams may come.* This consideration makes calamity so long endured; for *who would bear the vexations of life, which might be ended by a bare bodkin, but that he is afraid of something in unknown futurity?* This fear it is that gives efficacy to conscience, which, by turning the mind upon *this regard,* chills the ardour of resolution, checks the vigour of enterprize, and makes the current of desire stagnate in inactivity.

We may suppose that he would have applied these general observations to his own case, but that he discovered Ophelia.

JOHNSON.

Dr. Johnson's explication of the first five lines of this passage is surely wrong. Hamlet is not deliberating whether after our present state we are to exist or not, but whether he should continue to live, or put an end to his life: as is pointed out by the second and the three following lines, which are manifestly a paraphrase on the first; "whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer, &c. or to take arms." The question concerning our existence in a future state is not considered till the tenth line: — "To sleep! perchance, to dream;" &c. The train of Hamlet's reasoning from the middle

The flings and arrows of outrageous fortune;⁶
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,⁷

of the fifth line, "If to die, were to sleep," &c. Dr. Johnson has marked out with his usual accuracy.

In our poet's *Rape of Lucrece* we find the same question stated, which is proposed in the beginning of the present soliloquy:

"—— with herself she is in mutiny,

"To live or die, which of the twain were better."

MALONE.

⁶ —— arrows of outrageous fortune;] "Homines nos ut esse meminerimus, eâ lege natos, ut omnibus telis fortunæ proposita sit vita nostra." Cic. Epist. Fam. v. 16. STEEVENS.

⁷ Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,] A sea of troubles among the Greeks grew into a proverbial usage; κακῶν θάλασσα, κακῶν περικυμία. So that the expression figuratively means, the troubles of human life, which flow in upon us, and encompass us round, like a sea. THEOBALD.

Mr. Pope proposed *siege*. I know not why there should be so much solicitude about this metaphor. Shakspeare breaks his metaphors often, and in this desultory speech there was less need of preserving them. JOHNSON.

A similar phrase occurs in Rycharde Morysine's translation of Ludovicus Vives's *Introduction to Wysedome*, 1544: "—— how great a sea of evils every day ouerunneth" &c.

The change, however, which Mr. Pope would recommend, may be justified from a passage in *Romeo and Juliet*, scene the last:

"You—to remove that *siege of grief* from her——."

STEEVENS.

One cannot but wonder that the smallest doubt should be entertained concerning an expression which is so much in Shakspeare's manner; yet, to preserve the integrity of the metaphor, Dr. Warburton reads *assail* of troubles. In the *Prometheus Vinctus* of Æschylus a similar imagery is found:

Δυσχειμερον γε πελαγος ατηρας δυνς.

"The stormy sea of dire calamity."

and in the same play, as an anonymous writer has observed, *Gent. Magazine*, Aug. 1772,) we have a metaphor no less harsh than that of the text:

Θολεροι δε λογοι παιους' εικη

Στυγνης προς κυμασιν ατης.

"My plaintive words in vain confusedly beat

"Against the waves of hateful misery."

Shakspeare might have found the very phrase that he has em-

And, by opposing, end them?—To die,—to sleep,⁸—
 No more;—and, by a sleep, to say we end
 The heart-ach, and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to,—'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wish'd. To die;—to sleep;—
 To sleep! perchance to dream;—ay, there's the rub;
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,⁹
 Must give us pause: There's the respect,²
 That makes calamity of so long life:
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,³

ployed, in *The Tragedy of Queen Cordila*, MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES, 1575, which undoubtedly he read:

“For lacke of frendes to tell my *seas* of giltlesse smart.”

MALONE.

Menander uses this very expression. *Fragm.* p. 22. Amstel. 12mo. 1719:

Εἰς πῆλαγος αὐτὸν ἐμβαλεῖς γὰρ πραγμάτων.

“In mare molestiarum te conjicies.” HOLT WHITE.

⁸ ——— *To die,—to sleep,*] This passage is ridiculed in *The Scornful Lady* of Beaumont and Fletcher, as follows:

“—— be deceas'd, that is, asleep, for so the word is taken.
To sleep, to die, to die, to sleep; a very figure, sir.” &c. &c.

STEEVENS.

⁹ ——— *mortal coil,*] i. e. turmoil, bustle. WARBURTON.

A passage resembling this, occurs in a poem entitled *A dollfull Discours of two Straungers, a Lady and a Knight*, published by Churchyard, among his *Chippes*, 1575:

“Yea, shaking off this sinfull soyle,

“Me thincke in cloudes I see,

“Among the perfite chosen lambs,

“A place preparte for mee.” STEEVENS.

² ——— *There's the respect,*] i. e. the consideration. See Vol. XVI. p. 284, n. 6. MALONE.

³ ——— *the whips and scorns of time,*] The evils here complained of are not the product of time or duration simply, but of a corrupted age or manners. We may be sure, then, that Shakspeare wrote:

—— *the whips and scorns of th' time.*

and the description of the evils of a corrupt age, which follows, confirms this emendation. WARBURTON.

The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,⁴

It may be remarked, that Hamlet, in his enumeration of miseries, forgets, whether properly or not, that he is a prince, and mentions many evils to which inferior stations only are exposed.

JOHNSON.

I think we might venture to read — *the whips and scorns o' the times*, i. e. of times satirical as the age of Shakspeare, which probably furnished him with the idea.

In the reigns of Elizabeth and James (particularly in the former) there was more illiberal private abuse and peevish satire published, than in any others I ever knew of, except the present one. I have many of these publications, which were almost all pointed at individuals.

Daniel, in his *Musophilus*, 1599, has the same complaint:

“ Do you not see these pamphlets, *libels*, rhimes,

“ These strange confused tumults of the mind,

“ Are grown to be the sickness of *these times*,

“ The great disease inflicted on mankind?”

Whips and *scorns* are surely as inseparable companions, as public punishment and infamy.

Quips, the word which Dr. Johnson would introduce, is derived, by all etymologists, from *whips*.

Hamlet is introduced as reasoning on a question of general concernment. He therefore takes in all such evils as could befall mankind in general, without considering himself at present as a prince, or wishing to avail himself of the few exemptions which high place might once have claimed.

In part of King James I's *Entertainment passing to his Coronation*, by Ben Jonson and Decker, is the following line, and note on that line:

“ *And first account of years, of months, OF TIME.*”

“ By *time* we understand *the present*.” This explanation affords the sense for which I have contended, and without change.

STEEVENS.

The word *whips* is used by Marston in his *Satires*, 1599, in the sense required here:

“ Ingenuous melancholy, —

“ Inthroned thee in my blood; let me entreat,

“ Stay his quick jocund skips, and force him run

“ A fad-pac'd course, untill my *whips* be done.”

MALONE.

⁴ — *the proud man's contumely,*] Thus the quarto. The

The pangs of despis'd love,⁵ the law's delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus make
 With a bare bodkin?⁶ who would fardels bear,

folio reads—the poor man's contumely; the contumely which the poor man is obliged to endure :

“ Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se,

“ Quam quod ridiculos homines facit.”

⁵ — of despis'd love.] The folio reads—of *dispriz'd* love.

STEEVENS.

⁶ — might his quietus make

With a bare bodkin?] The first expression probably alluded to the writ of discharge, which was formerly granted to those barons and knights who personally attended the king on any foreign expedition. This discharge was called a *quietus*.

It is at this time the term for the acquittance which every sheriff receives on settling his accounts at the exchequer.

The word is used for the discharge of an account, by Webster, in his *Dutcheſs of Malſy*, 1623 :

“ And 'cause you ſhall not come to me in debt,

“ (Being now my ſteward) here upon your lips

“ I ſign your *quietus eſt*.”

Again:

“ You had the trick in audit time to be ſick,

“ Till I had ſign'd your *quietus*.”

A *bodkin* was the ancient term for a *ſmall dagger*. So, in the Second part of *The Mirrour for Knighthood*, 4to. bl. l. 1598 :
 “ — Not having any more weapons but a poor poynado, which uſually he did weare about him, and taking it in his hand, delivered theſe ſpeeches unto it. Thou, ſilly *bodkin*, ſhalt finiſh the piece of worke.” &c.

In the margin of Stowe's Chronicle, edit. 1614, it is ſaid, that Cæſar was ſlain with *bodkins*; and in *The Muſes' Looking-glaſs*, by Randolph, 1638 :

“ *Apho.* A rapier's but a *bodkin*.

“ *Deil.* And a *bodkin*

“ Is a moſt dang'rous weapon; ſince I read

“ Of Julius Cæſar's death, I durſt not venture

“ Into a taylor's ſhop, for fear of *bodkins*.”

Again, in *The Cuſtom of the Country*, by Beaumont and Fletcher :

“ — Out with your *bodkin*,

“ Your pocket dagger, your ſlillette.”—

To grunt and sweat⁷ under a weary life ;
But that the dread of something after death,—

Again, in *Sapho and Phao*, 1591: “ — there will be a desperate fray between two, made at all weapons, from the brown bill to the bodkin.”

Again, in Chaucer, as he is quoted at the end of a pamphlet called *The Serpent of Division*, &c. whereunto is annexed the Tragedy of *Gorboduc*, &c. 1591:

“ With bodkins was Cæsar Julius

“ Murdered at Rome of Brutus Crassus.” STEEVENS.

By a bare bodkin, does not perhaps mean, “ by so little an instrument as a dagger,” but “ by an unsheathed dagger.”

In the account which Mr. Steevens has given of the original meaning of the term *quietus*, after the words, “ who personally attended the king on any foreign expedition,” should have been added,—and were therefore exempted from the claims of scutage, or a tax on every knight's fee.” MALONE.

⁷ To grunt and sweat—] Thus the old copies. It is undoubtedly the true reading, but can scarcely be borne by modern ears.

JOHNSON.

This word occurs in *The Death of Zoroas*, by Nicholas Gria moald, a translation of a passage in the *Alexandreis* of Philippe Gualtier, into blank verse, printed at the end of *Lord Surry's Poems*:

“ — none the charge could give:

“ Here grunts, here grones, echwhere strong youth is spent.”

And Stanyhurst in his translation of Virgil, 1582, for supremum *congemuit* gives us: “ — for fighting it grunts.”

The change made by the editors [to groan] is however supported by the following lines in *Julius Cæsar*, A& IV. sc. i:

“ To groan and sweat under the business. STEEVENS.

I apprehend that it is the duty of an editor to exhibit what his author wrote, and not to substitute what may appear to the present age preferable: and Dr. Johnson was of the same opinion. See his note on the word *hugger-mugger*, A& IV. sc. v. I have therefore, though with some reluctance, adhered to the old copies, however unpleasing this word may be to the ear. On the stage, without doubt, an actor is at liberty to substitute a less offensive word. To the ears of our ancestors it probably conveyed no unpleasing sound; for we find it used by Chaucer and others:

The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns,²—puzzles the will ;

“ But never gront he at no stroke but on,

“ Or elles at two, but if his storie lie.”

The Monkes Tale, v. 14627, Tyrwhitt's edit.

Again, in *Wily Beguil'd*, written before 1596:

“ She's never well, but grunting in a corner.” MALONE.

* *The undiscover'd country, from whose beurn*

No traveller returns,] This has been cavilled at by Lord Orrery and others, but without reason. The idea of a *traveller* in Shakespeare's time, was of a person who gave an account of his adventures. Every voyage was a *Discovery*. John Taylor has “ *A Discovery by sea from London to Salisbury.*” FARMER.

Again, Marston's *Insatiate Countess*, 1603 :

“ ————— wrestled with death,

“ From whose stern cave none tracks a backward path.”

“ Qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum

“ Illuc unde negant redire quenquam.” Catullus.

Again, in Sanford's translation of *Cornelius Agrippa*, &c. 4to. bl. l. 1569 (once a book of uncommon popularity) “ The countrie of the dead is irremeable, that they cannot retourne.” Sig. P p.

STEEVENS.

This passage has been objected to by others on a ground which, at the first view of it, seems more plausible. Hamlet himself, it is objected, has had ocular demonstration that travellers do sometimes return from this strange country.

I formerly thought this an inconsistency. But this objection also is founded on a mistake. Our poet without doubt in the passage before us intended to say, that from the *unknown* regions of the dead no traveller returns, with all his *corporal powers*; such as he who goes on a voyage of *discovery* brings back, when he returns to the port from which he sailed. The traveller whom Hamlet had seen, though he appeared in the same habit which he had worn in his life time, was nothing but a shadow; “ invulnerable as the air,” and consequently *incorporeal*.

If, says the objector, the traveller has once reached this coast, it is not an undiscovered country. But by *undiscovered* Shakespeare meant not undiscovered by departed spirits, but, undiscovered, or unknown to “ such fellows as us, who crawl beneath earth and heaven;” *superis incognita tellus*. In this sense every country, of which the traveller does not return *alive* to give an account, may be said to be *undiscovered*. The ghost has given us no account of

And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
 Than fly to others that we know not of?
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
 And enterprizes of great pith⁹ and moment,
 With this regard, their currents turn awry,²
 And lose the name of action.—Soft you, now!
 The fair Ophelia:—Nymph, in thy orisons
 Be all my sins remember'd.³

OPH.

Good my lord,

the region from whence he came, being, as he has himself informed us, “forbid to tell the secrets of his prison-house.”

Marlowe, before our poet, had compared death to a journey to an undiscovered country:

“ ——— weep not for Mortimer,
 “ That scorns the world, and, as a traveller,
 “ Goes to discover countries yet unknown.”

King Edward II. 1598 (written before 1593):

MALONE.

Perhaps this is another instance of Shakspeare's acquaintance with his Bible: “Afore I goe thither, from whence I shall not turne againe, even to the lande of darkenesse and shadowe of death; yea into that darke cloudie lande and deadlye shadowe whereas is no order, but terrible feare as in the darknesse.” *Job*, ch. x.

“The way that I must goe is at hande, but whence I shall not turne againe.” *Ibid.* ch. 16.

I quote Cranmer's Bible. DOUCE.

⁹ — great pith —] Thus the folio. The quartos read,—of great pitch. STEEVENS.

Pitch seems to be the better reading. The allusion is to the pitching or throwing the bar;—a manly exercise, usual in country villages. RITSON.

² — turn awry,] Thus the quartos. The folio—turn away: STEEVENS.

³ — Nymph, in thy orisons &c.] This is a touch of nature: Hamlet, at the sight of Ophelia, does not immediately recollect, that he is to personate madness, but makes her an address grave and solemn, such as the foregoing meditation excited in his thoughts. JOHNSON.

How does your honour for this many a day ?

HAM. I humbly thank you ; well.

OPH. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver ;
I pray you, now receive them.

HAM.

No, not I ;

I never gave you aught.

OPH. My honour'd lord, you know right well,
you did ;

And, with them, words of so sweet breath compos'd

As made the things more rich : their perfume lost,
Take these again ; for to the noble mind,
Rich gifts wax poor, when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

HAM. Ha, ha ! are you honest ?

OPH. My lord ?

HAM. Are you fair ?

OPH. What means your lordship ?

HAM. That if you be honest, and fair, you should
admit no discourse to your beauty.⁴

⁴ *That if you be honest, and fair, you should admit no discourse to your beauty.*] This is the reading of all the modern editions, and is copied from the quarto. The folio reads,—*your honesty* should admit no discourse to your beauty. The true reading seems to be this,—*If you be honest and fair, you should admit your honesty to no discourse with your beauty.* This is the sense evidently required by the process of the conversation. JOHNSON.

That if you be honest and fair, you should admit no discourse to your beauty.] The reply of Ophelia proves beyond doubt, that this reading is wrong.

The reading of the folio appears to be the right one, and requires no amendment.—“ Your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty,” means,—“ Your honesty should not admit your beauty to any discourse with her ;” which is the very sense that Johnson contends for, and expressed with sufficient clearness.

M. MASON

OPH. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

HAM. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd, than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness:⁵ this was some time a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

OPH. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

HAM. You should not have believed me: for virtue cannot so inoculate⁶ our old stock, but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

OPH. I was the more deceived.

HAM. Get thee to a nunnery; Why would'st thou be a breeder of finners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better, my mother had not borne me:⁷ I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck, than I have thoughts to put them in,⁸ imagination to give them shape,

⁵ — into his likeness:] The modern editors read—its likeness; but the text is right. Shakspeare and his contemporaries frequently use the personal for the neutral pronoun. So Spenser, *Faery Queen*, Book III. ch. ix:

“Then forth it breaks: and with his furious blast,

“Confounds both land and seas, and skies doth overcast.”

See p. 65, n. 6. MALONE.

⁶ —inoculate—] This is the reading of the first folio. The first quarto reads *euocutat*; the second *euacuat*; and the third, *evacuate*. STEEVENS.

⁷ — I could accuse me of such things, that it were better, my mother had not borne me:] So, in our poet's 88th Sonnet:

“— I can set down a story

“Of faults conceal'd, wherein I am attainted.” MALONE.

⁸ — with more offences at my beck, than I have thoughts to put them in,] To put a thing into thought, is to think on it. JOHNSON.

— at my beck,] That is, always ready to come about me.

STEEVENS.

or time to act them in: What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us: Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

OPH. At home, my lord.

HAM. Let the doors be shut upon him; that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

OPH. O, help him, you sweet heavens!

HAM. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry; Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery; farewell: Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough, what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell.

OPH. Heavenly powers, restore him!

HAM. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough;⁸ God hath given you one face, and you

⁸ *I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; &c.]* This is according to the quarto; the folio, for *painting*, has *prattlings*, and for *face*, has *pace*, which agrees with what follows, *you jig, you amble*. Probably the author wrote both. I think the common reading best. JOHNSON.

I would continue to read, *paintings*, because these destructive aids of beauty seem, in the time of Shakspeare, to have been general objects of satire. So, in Drayton's *Mooncalf*:

“ — No sooner got the teens,
 “ But her own natural beauty she disdains;
 “ With oyls and broths most venomous and base
 “ She plaisters over her well-favour'd face;
 “ And those sweet veins by nature rightly plac'd
 “ Wherewith she seems that white skin to have lac'd,
 “ She soon doth alter; and, with fading blue,
 “ Blanching her bosom, she makes others new.”

STEEVENS.

make yourselves another:⁹ you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance:² Go to; I'll no more of't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live;³ the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. [*Exit HAMLET.*

OPH. O, what a noble mind is here oterthrown! The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword:⁴

The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion,⁵ and the mould of form,⁶
The observ'd of all observers! quite, quite down!

⁹ — God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another:] In *Guzman de Alfarache*, 1623, p. 13, we have an invective against painting in which is a similar passage: "O filthiness, above all filthiness! O affront, above all other affronts! that God having given thee one face, thou shouldst abuse his image and make thyselfe another." REED.

² — make your wantonness your ignorance:] You mistake by wanton affectation, and pretend to mistake by ignorance.

JOHNSON.

³ — all but one, shall live:] By the one who shall not live, he means his step-father. MALONE.

⁴ The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword:] The poet certainly meant to have placed his words thus:

The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue, sword;
otherwise the excellence of *tongue* is appropriated to the *soldier*, and the *scholar* wears the *sword*. WARNER.

This regulation is needless. So, in *Tarquin and Lucrece*:

"Princes are the glass, the school, the book,

"Where subjects eyes do learn, do read, do look."

And in *Quintilian*: "Multum agit sexus, ætas, conditio; ut in feminis, senibus, pupillis, liberos, parentes, conjuges, alligantibus."

FARMER.

⁵ The glass of fashion,] "Speculum consuetudinis." Cicero.

STEEVENS.

⁶ — the mould of form,] The model by whom all endeavoured to form themselves. JOHNSON.

And I, of ladies most deject⁷ and wretched,
 That suck'd the honey of his musick vows,
 Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
 Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune⁸ and harsh;
 That unmatch'd form and feature⁹ of blown youth,
 Blasted with ecstasy:² O, woe is me!
 To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Re-enter King and POLONIUS.

KING. Love! his affections do not that way
 tend;
 Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
 Was not like madness. There's something in his
 soul,
 O'er which his melancholy fits on brood;
 And, I do doubt, the hatch, and the disclose,³

⁷ ——— *most deject* —] So, in Heywood's *Silver Age*, 1613:

“ ——— What knight is that

“ So passionately *deject*?” STEEVENS.

⁸ ——— *out of tune* —] Thus the folio. The quarto — *out of time*.
 STEEVENS.

These two words in the hand-writing of Shakspeare's age are almost indistinguishable, and hence are frequently confounded in the old copies. See Vol. V. p. 279, n. 8. MALONE.

⁹ ——— *and feature* —] Thus the folio. The quartos read — *stature*. STEEVENS.

² ——— *with ecstasy*:] The word *ecstasy* was anciently used to signify some degree of alienation of mind.

So, Gawin Douglas, translating — *stetit acri fixa dolore*:

“ In *ecstasy* she stood, and mad almost.”

See Vol. IV. p. 113. n. 9; and Vol. XI. p. 146, n. 4.

STEEVENS.

³ ——— *the disclose*,] This was the technical term. So, in *The Maid of Honour*, by Massinger:

“ One aerie with proportion ne'er *discloses*

“ The eagle and the wren.” MALONE.

Will be some danger: Which for to prevent,
I have, in quick determination,
Thus set it down; He shall with speed to England,
For the demand of our neglected tribute:
Haply, the seas, and countries different,
With variable objects, shall expel
This something-settled matter in his heart;
Whereon his brains still beating, puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

POL. It shall do well: But yet I do believe,
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love.—How now, Ophelia?
You need not tell us what lord Hamlet said:
We heard it all.—My lord, do as you please;
But, if you hold it fit, after the play,
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief; let her be round with him;⁴
And I'll be plac'd, so please you, in the ear
Of all their conference: If she find him not,
To England send him; or confine him, where
Your wisdom best shall think.

KING. It shall be so:
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.
[*Exeunt.*

Again, in the fifth act of the play now before us:

“ Ere that her golden couplets are *disclos'd*.”

See my note on this passage. STEEVENS.

⁴ *—be round with him;*] To be round with a person, is to reprimand him with freedom. So, in *A Mad World, my Masters*, by Middleton, 1608: “ She's round with her i'faith.” MALONE.

See Vol. X. p. 229, n. 4. STEEVENS.

S C E N E II.

A Hall in the same.

Enter HAMLET, and certain Players.

HAM. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious perriwig-pated⁵ fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings;⁶ who, for the most part, are capable

⁵ ——— perriwig-pated —] This is a ridicule on the quantity of false hair worn in Shakspeare's time, for wigs were not in common use till the reign of Charles II. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Julia says—"I'll get me such a colour'd perriwig."

Goff, who wrote several plays in the reign of James I. and was no mean scholar, has the following lines in his tragedy of *The Courageous Turk*, 1632:

" ——— How now, you heavens,
" Grow you so proud you must needs put on curl'd locks,
" And clothe yourselves in perriwigs of fire?"

Players, however, seem to have worn them most generally. So, in *Every Woman in her Humour*, 1609: " ——— as none wear hoods but monks and ladies; and feathers but fore-horses, &c;—none perriwigs but players and pictures. STEEVENS.

⁶ ——— the groundlings;] The meaner people then seem to have sat below, as they now sit in the upper gallery, who, not well understanding poetical language, were sometimes gratified by a

of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows, and noise:?

mimical and mute representation of the drama, previous to the dialogue. JOHNSON.

Before each act of the tragedy of *Jocasta*, translated from Euripides, by Geo. Gascoigne and Fra. Kinwelmersh, the order of these dumb shows is very minutely described. This play was presented at Gray's-Inn by them in 1566. The mute exhibitions included in it are chiefly emblematical, nor do they display a picture of one single scene which is afterwards performed on the stage. In some other pieces I have observed, that they serve to introduce such circumstances as the limits of a play would not admit to be represented.

Thus, in *Herod and Antipater*, 1622:

" ——— Let me now
 " Intreat your worthy patience to contain
 " Much in imagination; and, what words
 " Cannot have time to utter, let your eyes,
 " Out of this DUMB SHOW, tell your memories."

In short dumb shows sometimes supplied deficiencies, and, at others, filled up the space of time which was necessary to pass while business was supposed to be transacted in foreign parts. With this method of preserving one of the unities, our ancestors appear to have been satisfied.

Ben Jonson mentions the *groundlings* with equal contempt. " The understanding gentlemen of the ground here."

Again, in *The Case is Alter'd*, 1609: " ——— a rude barbarous crew that have no brains, and yet *grounded* judgements; they will hiss any thing that mounts above their *grounded* capacities."

Again, in *Lady Alimony*, 1659: " Be your stage-curtains artificially drawn, and so covertly shrowded that the squint-ey'd *groundling* may not peep in?"

In our early play-houses the pit had neither floor nor benches. Hence the term of *groundlings* for those who frequented it.

The *groundling*, in its primitive signification, means a fish which always keeps at the bottom of the water. STEEVENS.

7 ——— who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows, and noise:] i. e. have a capacity for nothing but dumb shows; understand nothing else. So, in Heywood's *History of Women*, 1624: " I have therein imitated our historical and comical poets, that write to the stage; who, lest the auditory should be dulled with serious discourses, in every act present some zany, with his mimick gesture, to breed in the less capable mirth and laughter. See Vol. XV. p. 357, n. 4. MALONE.

I would have such a fellow whipp'd for o'er-doing Termagant;⁸ it out-herods Herod:⁹ Pray you, avoid it.

— — *inexplicable dumb shows,*] I believe the meaning is, *shows, without words to explain them.* JOHNSON.

Rather, I believe, shows which are too confusedly conducted to explain themselves.

I meet with one of these in Heywood's play of *The Four Prentices of London*, 1615, where the *Presenter* says:

" I must entreat your patience to forbear
 " While we do feast your eye and starve your ear.
 " For in *dumb shews*, which, were they writ at large,
 " Would ask a long and tedious circumstance,
 " Their infant fortunes I will soon express:" &c.

Then follow the *dumb shows*, which well deserve the character Hamlet has already given of this species of entertainment, as may be seen from the following passage: " Enter Tancred, with Bella Franca richly attired, she *somewhat affecting him*, though she *makes no show of it.*" Surely this may be called an *inexplicable dumb show*.

STEEVENS.

⁸ — — *Termagant;*] *Termagaunt* (says Dr. Percy) is the name given in the old romances to the god of the *Sarazens*; in which he is constantly linked with *Mahound*, or *Mohammed*. Thus in the legend of SYR GUY, the Soudan swears:

" So helpe me *Mahowne* of might,
 " And *Termagaunt* my God so bright."

So, also, in Hall's first Satire:

" Nor fright the reader with the Pagan vaunt
 " Of mightie *Mahound*, and greate *Termagaunt*."

Again, in Marston's 7th Satire:

" — — let whirlwinds and confusion teare
 " The center of our state; let giants reare
 " Hill upon hill; let westerne *Termagant*
 " Shake heaven's vault" &c.

Termagant is also mentioned by Spenser in his *Faery Queen*, and by Chaucer in *The Tale of Sir Topas*; and by Beaumont and Fletcher in *King or no King*, as follows: " This would make a saint swear like soldier, and a soldier like *Termagant*."

Again, in *The Picture*, by Massinger:

" — — a hundred thousand Turks
 " Affail'd him, every one a *Termagaunt*." STEEVENS.

Again, in Bale's *Acts of English Votaries*:

" Grennyng upon her, lyke *Termagauntes* in a play."

RITSON.

1. PLAY. I warrant your honour.

HAM. Be not too tame neither, but let your own

⁹ ——— *out-herods Herod*:] The character of *Herod* in the ancient mysteries, was always a violent one.

See the *Coventriæ Ludus* among the Cotton MSS. Vespasian D. VIII:

“ Now I regne lyk a kyng aray’d ful rich,
 “ Rollyd in rynggs and robys of array,
 “ Dukys with dentys I drive into the dych:
 “ My dedys be full dowty demyd be day.”

Again, in *The Chester Whitsun Plays*, MS. Harl. 1013:

“ I kyng of kynges, non foe keene,
 “ I sovraigne fir, as well is scene,
 “ I tyrant that maye bouth take and teene
 “ Castell, tower, and towne;

“ I welde this worlde withouten wene,
 “ I beate all those unbuxome beene;
 “ I drive the devills alby dene
 “ Deepe in hell adowne.

“ For I am kinge of all mankinde,
 “ I byd, I beate, I lose, I bynde,
 “ I master the moone; take this in mynde
 “ That I am most of mighte.

“ I ame the greatest above degree,
 “ That is, that was, or ever shall be;
 “ The sonne it dare not shine on me,
 “ And I byd him goe downe.

“ No raine to fall shall now be free,
 “ Nor no lorde have that liberty
 “ That dare abyde and I byd fleey,
 “ But I shall crake his crowne.”

See *The Vintner’s Play*, p. 67.

Chaucer, describing a parish clerk, in his *Miller’s Tale*, says:

“ He playeth *Herodes* on a skaffold high.”

The parish clerks and other subordinate ecclesiasticks appear to have been our first actors, and to have represented their characters on distinct pulpits or *scaffolds*. Thus, in one of the stage-directions to the 27th pageant in the Coventry collection already mentioned: “ What tyme that processyon is entered into y^e place, and the Herowdys taken his *schaffalde*, and Annas and Cayphas their *schaffaldys*,” &c. STEEVENS.

discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'er-step not the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time,² his form and pressure.³ Now this, over-

To the instances given by Mr. Steevens of Herod's lofty language, may be added these lines from the Coventry plays among the Cotton MSS. p. 92:

" Of bewte and of boldnes I ber evermore the belle,
 " Of mayn and of myght I master every man;
 " I dyngge with my doughtyness the devyl down to helle,
 " For bothe of hevyn and of earth I am kynge certayn."

MALONE.

Again, in *The Unluckie Firmentie*, by G. Kyttes, 4to. bl. 1:

" But he was in such a rage
 " As one that shulde on a stage
 " The part of *Herode* playe." RITSON.

² ——— age and body of the time,] The age of the time can hardly pass. May we not read, the *face* and *body*, or did the author write, the *page*? The *page* suits well with *form* and *pressure*, but ill with *body*. JOHNSON.

To exhibit the *form and pressure* of the *age* of the *time*, is, to represent the manners of the time suitable to the period that is treated of, according as it may be ancient, or modern.

STEEVENS.

I can neither think this passage right as it stands, or approve of either of the amendments suggested by Johnson.—There is one more simple than either, that will remove every difficulty. Instead of "*the very age and body of the time*," (from which it is hard to extract any meaning,) I read—"every age and body of the time;" and then the sense will be this:—"Show virtue her own likeness, and every stage of life, every profession or body of men, its form and resemblance." By *every age*, is meant the *different stages of life*;—by *every body*, the *various fraternities, sorts, and ranks of mankind*. M. MASON.

Perhaps Shakspeare did not mean to connect these words. It is

done, or come tardy off, though it make the un-
skilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve;
the censure of which one,⁴ must in your allowance,⁵
o'er-weigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be
players,⁶ that I have seen play,—and heard others

the end of playing, says Hamlet, to shew the age in which we live,
and the body of the time, its form and pressure: to delineate ex-
actly the manners of the age, and the particular humour of the
day. MALONE.

³ ———pressure.] Resemblance, as in a *print*. JOHNSON.

⁴ ———the censure of which one &c.] Ben Jonson seems to have
imitated this passage in his *Poetaster*, 1601:

“ ——— I will try
“ If tragedy have a more kind aspect;
“ Her favours in my next I will pursue;
“ Where if I prove the *pleasure but of one*,
“ *If he judicious be, he shall be alone*
“ *A theatre unto me.*” MALONE.

———the censure of which one,] The meaning is, “ the censure
of one of which,” and probably that should be the reading also.
The present reading, though intelligible, is very licentious, espe-
cially in prose. M. MASON.

⁵ ———in your allowance,] In your approbation. See Vol. XX.
p. 389, n. 3. MALONE.

⁶ O, there be players, &c.] I would read thus: “ There be
players, that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that
highly (not to speak profanely) that neither having the accent nor
the gait of Christian, Pagan, nor *Mussulman*, have so strutted and
bellowed, that I thought some of nature's journeymen had made
the men, and not made them well,” &c. FARMER.

I have no doubt that our author wrote,—“ that I thought some
of nature's journeymen had made *them*, and not made them
well,” &c. *Them* and *men* are frequently confounded in the old
copies. See the *Comedy of Errors*, A&II. sc. ii. folio, 1623:—
“ because it is a blessing that he bestows on beasts, and what he
hath scanted *them* [r. *men*] in hair, he hath given them in wit.”—
In the present instance the compositor probably caught the word
men from the last syllable of *journeymen*. Shakspeare could not
mean to assert as a general truth, that nature's journeymen had
made *men*, i. e. all mankind; for, if that were the case, these

praise, and that highly,—not to speak it profanely,⁷ that, neither having the accent of christians, nor the gait of christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted, and bellow'd, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

1. PLAY. I hope, we have reform'd that indifferently with us.

HAM. O, reform it altogether. And let those, that play your clowns, speak no more than is set down for them:⁸ for there be of them, that will

strutting players would have been on a footing with the rest of the species. Nature herself, the poet means to say, made all mankind except these strutting players, and they were made by Nature's journeymen.

A passage in *King Lear*, in which we meet with the same sentiment, in my opinion fully supports the emendation now proposed:

“ Kent. Nature disclaims in THEE, a tailor made THEE.

“ Corn. Thou art a strange fellow: A tailor make a man!

“ Kent. Ay, a taylor, sir; a stone-cutter or a painter [*Nature's journeymen*] could not have made *him* so ill, though he had been but two hours at the trade.”

This notion of Nature keeping a shop, and employing journeymen to form mankind, was common in Shakspeare's time. See Lyly's *Woman in the Moon*, a comedy, 1597: “ They draw the curtains from before *Nature's shop*, where stands an image clad, and some unclad.” MALONE.

⁷ ——— *not to speak it profanely,*] *Profanely* seems to relate, not to the praise which he has mentioned, but to the censure which he is about to utter. Any gross or indelicate language was called *profane*. JOHNSON.

So, in *Othello*:—“ he is a most *profane* and liberal counsellor.” MALONE.

⁸ ——— *speak no more than is set down for them:]* So, in *The Antipodes*, by Brome, 1638:

“ ——— you, sir, are incorrigible, and

“ Take licence to yourself to add unto

“ Your parts, your own free fancy,” &c.

“ ——— That is a way, my lord, has been allow'd

themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villainous; and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.— [Exeunt Players.

Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

How now, my lord? will the king hear this piece of work?

POL. And the queen too, and that presently.

“ On elder stages, to move mirth and laughter.”

“ — Yes, in the days of *Tarlton*, and of *Kempe*,

“ Before the stage was purg'd from barbarism,” &c.

Stowe informs us, (p. 697, edit. 1615), that among the twelve players who were sworn the queen's servants in 1583, “ were two rare men, viz. Thomas Wilson, for a quick delicate refined *extemporall witte*; and Richard Tarleton, for a wondrous plentiful, pleasant *extemporall witt*,” &c.

Again, in *Tarleton's Newes from Purgatory*: “ — I absented myself from all plaies, as wanting that merrye Roscius of plaiers that famosed all comedies so with his pleasant and *extemporall invention*.”

This cause for complaint, however, against low comedians, is still more ancient; for in *The Contention betwyxte Churchyard and Camell*, &c. 1560, I find the following passage:

“ But Vices in stage plaies,

“ When theyr matter is gon,

“ They laugh out the reste

“ To the lookers on.

“ And so wantinge matter,

“ You brynge in my coate,” &c. STEEVENS.

The clown very often addressed the audience, in the middle of the play, and entered into a contest of raillery and sarcasm with such of the audience as chose to engage with him. It is to this absurd practice that Shakspeare alludes. See the *Historical Account of our old English Theatres*, Vol. III. MALONE.

HAM. Bid the players make haste.—

[Exit POLONIUS.]

Will you two help to hasten them?

BOTH. Ay, my lord.

[Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

HAM. What, ho; Horatio!

Enter HORATIO.

HOR. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

HAM. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.

HOR. O, my dear lord,——

HAM. Nay, do not think I flatter:
For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revenue hast, but thy good spirits,
To feed, and clothe thee? Why should the poor
be flatter'd?

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp;
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee,⁹
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?
Since my dear soul² was mistress of her choice,
And could of men distinguish her election,
She hath seal'd thee for herself:³ for thou hast been

⁹ —— *the pregnant hinges of the knee,*] I believe the sense of *pregnant* in this place is, *quick, ready, prompt.* JOHNSON.

See Vol. VI. p. 8, n. 6. STEEVENS.

² —— *my dear soul* —] Perhaps—*my clear soul.* JOHNSON.

Dear soul is an expression equivalent to the φίλα γένητα, φίλον ἦτορ, of Homer. STEEVENS.

³ *And could of men distinguish her election,*

She hath seal'd thee for herself:] Thus the quarto. The folio thus:

*And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee &c.* STEEVENS.

As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
 A man, that fortune's buffets and rewards
 Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest'd are those,
 Whose blood and judgement⁴ are so well co-mingled,⁵
 That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
 To sound what stop she please: Give me that man
 That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
 In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
 As I do thee.—Something too much of this.—
 There is a play to-night before the king;
 One scene of it comes near the circumstance,
 Which I have told thee of my father's death.
 I pr'ythee, when thou seest that act a-foot,
 Even with the very comment of thy soul
 Observe my uncle: if his occulted guilt
 Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
 It is a damned ghost that we have seen;
 And my imaginations are as foul
 As Vulcan's stithy.⁶ Give him heedful note:

Mr. Ritson prefers the reading of the quarto, and observes, that to *distinguish her election*, is no more than to *make her election*. *Distinguish of men*, he adds, is exceeding harsh, to say the best of it.

REED.

⁴ *Whose blood and judgement—*] According to the doctrine of the four humours, *desire* and *confidence* were seated in the blood, and *judgement* in the phlegm, and the due mixture of the humours made a perfect character. JOHNSON.

⁵ *— co-mingled,*] Thus the folio. The quarto reads—*comedled*; which had formerly the same meaning. MALONE.

⁶ *— Vulcan's stithy.*] *Stithy* is a smith's anvil. JOHNSON.

So, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

“Now by the forge that *stithied* Mars's helm.”

Again, in Greene's *Card of Fancy*, 1608: “determined to strike on the *stith* while the iron was hot.”

Again, in Chaucer's celebrated description of the *Temple of Mars*, Mr. Tyrwhitt's edit. ver. 2028:

“——— the smith

“That forgeth sharp swardes on his *stith*.” STEEVENS.

For I mine eyes will rivet to his face;
And, after, we will both our judgements join
In censure of his seeming.

HOR. Well, my lord:
If he steal aught, the whilst this play is playing,
And scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

HAM. They are coming to the play; I must be
idle:
Get you a place.

*Danish march. A flourish. Enter King, Queen,
POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDEN-
STERN, and Others.*

KING. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

HAM. Excellent, i'faith; of the camelion's dish:
I eat the air, promise-cramm'd: You cannot feed
capons so.

KING. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet;
these words are not mine.

HAM. No, nor mine now.⁷ My lord, — you
play'd once in the university, you say?⁸

[To POLONIUS.]

⁷ — nor mine now.] A man's words, says the proverb, are his own no longer than he keeps them unspoken. JOHNSON.

⁸ — you play'd once in the university, you say?] It should seem from the following passage in Vice Chancellor Hatcher's letters to Lord Burghley on June 21, 1580, that the common players were likewise occasionally admitted to perform there: "Whereas it hath pleased your honour to recommend my lorde of Oxenford his players, that they might show their cunning in several plays already practised by 'em before the Queen's majesty" — (denied on account of the pestilence and commencement:) "of late we denied the like to the Right Honourable the Lord of Leicester his servants." FARMER.

The practice of acting Latin plays in the universities of Oxford

POL. That did I, my lord ; and was accounted a good actor.

HAM. And what did you enact ?

POL. I did enact Julius Cæsar :⁹ I was kill'd i'the Capitol ;² Brutus kill'd me.

and Cambridge, is very ancient, and continued to near the middle of the last century. They were performed occasionally for the entertainment of princes and other great personages ; and regularly at Christmas, at which time a *Lord of misrule* was appointed at Oxford, to regulate the exhibitions, and a similar officer with the title of *Imperator*, at Cambridge. The most celebrated actors at Cambridge were the students of St. John's and King's colleges : at Oxford, those of Christ-Church. In the hall of that college a Latin comedy called *Marcus Geminus*, and the Latin tragedy of *Progne*, were performed before Queen Elizabeth in the year 1566 ; and in 1564, the Latin tragedy of *Dido* was played before her majesty, when she visited the university of Cambridge. The exhibition was in the body or nave of the chapel of King's college, which was lighted by the royal guards, each of whom bore a staff-torch in his hand. See Peck's *Desider. Cur.* p. 36, n. x. The actors in this piece were all of that college. The author of the tragedy, who in the Latin account of this royal visit, in the Museum, [MSS. Baker, 7037, p. 203,] is said to have been *Regalis Collegii olim socius*, was, I believe, John Rightwise, who was elected a fellow of King's college, in 1507, and according to Anthony Wood, "made the tragedy of *Dido* out of Virgil, and acted the same with the scholars of his school [St. Paul's, of which he was appointed master in 1522,] before Cardinal Wolsey with great applause." In 1583, the same play was performed at Oxford, in Christ-Church hall, before Albertus de Alafco, a Polish prince Palatine, as was William Gager's Latin comedy, entitled *Rivales*. On Elizabeth's second visit to Oxford, in 1592, a few years before the writing of the present play, she was entertained on the 24th and 26th of September, with the representation of the last-mentioned play, and another Latin comedy, called *Bellum Grammaticale*.

MALONE.

⁹ *I did enact Julius Cæsar :*] A Latin play on the subject of Cæsar's death was performed at Christ-Church in Oxford, in 1582 ; and several years before, a Latin play on the same subject, written by Jacques Grevin, was acted in the college of Beauvais, at Paris. I suspect that there was likewise an English play on the story of

HAM. It was a brute part of him,³ to kill so capital a calf there.—Be the players ready?

ROS. Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.⁴

QUEEN. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

HAM. No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

POL. O ho! do you mark that? [*To the King.*

HAM. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[*Lying down at OPHELIA'S feet.*⁵

Cæsar before the time of Shakspeare. See Vol. XVIII. p. 2, and the *Essay on the Order of Shakspeare's Plays*, Vol. II.

MALONE.

^a — *I was kill'd i'the Capitol;*] This, it is well known, was not the case; for Cæsar, we are expressly told by Plutarch, was killed in *Pompey's portico*. But our poet followed the received opinion, and probably the representation of his own time, in a play on the subject of Cæsar's death, previous to that which he wrote. The notion that Julius Cæsar was killed in the Capitol is as old as the time of Chaucer:

“ This Julius to the *capitolie* wente
 “ Upon a day, as he was wont to gon,
 “ And in the *capitolie* anon him hente
 “ This false Brutus, and his other soon,
 “ And flicked him with bodekins anon
 “ With many a wound,” &c. *The Monkes Tale.*

Tyrwhitt's edit. Vol. II. p. 31. MALONE.

^b *It was a brute part of him,*] Sir John Harrington in his *Metamorphosis of Ajax*, 1596, has the same quibble: “ O brave-minded Brutus! but this I must truly say, they were two *brutish parts* both of him and you; one to kill his sons for treason, the other to kill his father in treason.” STEEVENS.

^c — *they stay upon your patience.*] May it not be read more intelligibly,—*they stay upon your pleasure.* In *Macbeth* it is:

“ Noble Macbeth, we stay upon your *leisure.*”

JOHNSON.

^d — *at Ophelia's feet.*] To lie at the feet of a mistress during any dramatick representation, seems to have been a common act

OPH. No, my lord.

HAM. I mean, my head upon your lap?⁶

OPH. Ay, my lord.

HAM. Do you think, I meant country matters?⁷

OPH. I think nothing, my lord.

HAM. That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

OPH. What is, my lord?

HAM. Nothing.

OPH. You are merry, my lord.

HAM. Who, I?

OPH. Ay, my lord.

HAM. O! your only jig-maker.⁸ What should a

of gallantry. So, in *The Queen of Corinth*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

“ Ushers her to her coach, *lies at her feet*

“ *At solemn masques, applauding what she laughs at.*”

Again, in Gascoigne's *Greene Knight's farewell to Fancie*:

“ *To lie along in ladies lappes, &c.* STEEVENS.

⁶ *I mean, &c.*] This speech and *Ophelia's* reply to it are omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

⁷ *Do you think, I meant country matters?*] Dr. Johnson, from a casual inadvertence, proposed to read—country manners. The old reading is certainly right. What Shakspeare meant to allude to, must be too obvious to every reader, to require any explanation. MALONE.

⁸ ——— *your only jig-maker.*] There may have been some humour in this passage, the force of which is now diminished:

“ ——— many gentlemen

“ Are not, as in the days of understanding,

“ Now satisfied without a *jig*, which since

“ They cannot, with their honour, call for after

“ The play, they look to be serv'd up in the middle.”

Changes, or Love in a Maze, by Shirley, 1632.

In *The Hog hath lost his Pearl*, 1614, one of the players comes to solicit a gentleman to write a *jig* for him. A *jig* was not in

man do, but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

OPH. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

HAM. So long? Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of fables.⁹ O heavens!

Shakspeare's time only a dance, but a ludicrous dialogue in metre, and of the lowest kind, like Hamlet's conversation with Ophelia. Many of these jiggs are entered in the books of the Stationers' Company:—" Philips his *Jigg* of the flyppers, 1595. Kempe's *Jigg* of the Kitchen-stuff-woman, 1595." STEEVENS.

The following lines in the prologue to Fletcher's *Love's Pilgrimage*, confirm Mr. Steevens's remark:

" ——— for approbation,

" A jig shall be clap'd at, and every rhyme

" Prais'd and applauded by a clamorous chime."

A jig was not always in the form of a dialogue. Many historical ballads were formerly called jigs. See also p. 143, n. 6, and *The Historical Account of the English Theatres*, Vol. III. MALONE.

A jig, though it signified a ludicrous dialogue in metre, yet it also was used for a dance. In the extract from Stephen Gosson in the next page but one, we have,

" ——— tumbling, dancing of gigges." RITSON.

⁹ ——— *Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of fables.*] The conceit of these words is not taken. They are an ironical apology for his mother's cheerful looks: two months was long enough in conscience to make any dead husband forgotten. But the editors, in their nonsensical blunder, have made Hamlet say just the contrary. That the devil and he would both go into mourning, though his mother did not. The true reading is—*Nay, then let the devil wear black, 'fore I'll have a suit of fable. 'Fore,* i. e. before. As much as to say,—Let the devil wear black for me, I'll have none. The Oxford editor despises an emendation so easy, and reads it thus,—*Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of ermine.* And you could expect no less, when such a critick had the dressing of him. But the blunder was a pleasant one. The senseless editors had wrote *fables*, the fur so called, for *fable*, black. And the critick only changed this fur for that; by a like figure, the common people say,—*You rejoice the cockles of my heart, for the muscles of my heart*; an unlucky mistake of one shell-fish for another. WARBURTON.

I know not why our editors should with such implacable anger

die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope, a great man's memory may outlive

persecute their predecessors. *Oi venpoi mē dānvestiv*, the dead, it is true, can make no resistance, they may be attacked with great security; but since they can neither feel nor mend, the safety of mauling them seems greater than the pleasure; nor perhaps would it much misbecome us to remember, amidst our triumphs over the *nonsensical* and *senseless*, that we likewise are men; that *debemur morti*, and as Swift observed to Burnet, shall soon be among the dead ourselves.

I cannot find how the common reading is nonsense, nor why Hamlet, when he laid aside his dress of mourning, in a country where it was *bitter cold*, and the air was *nipping and eager*, should not have a *suit of fables*. I suppose it is well enough known, that the fur of fables is not black. JOHNSON.

A *suit of fables* was the richest dress that could be worn in Denmark. STEEVENS.

Here again is an equivoque. In *Massinger's Old Law*, we have,

“ — A cunning grief,
“ That's only faced with *fables* for a show,
“ But gawdy-hearted. FARMER.

— *Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of fables.* Nay then, says Hamlet, if my father be so long dead as you say, let the devil wear black; as for me, so far from wearing a mourning dress, I'll wear the most costly and magnificent suit that can be procured; *a suit trimmed with fables*.

Our poet furnished Hamlet with a suit of fables on the present occasion, not, as I conceive, because such a dress was suited to “a country where it was bitter cold, and the air was nipping and eager,” (as Dr. Johnson supposed,) nor because “a suit of fables was the richest dress that could be worn in Denmark,” (as Mr. Steevens has suggested,) of which probably he had no knowledge, but because a suit trimmed with fables was in Shakspeare's time the richest dress worn by men in England. We have had again and again occasion to observe, that, wherever his scene might happen to be, the customs of his own country were still in his thoughts.

By the statute of apparel, 24 Henry VIII. c. 13, (article *furres*,) it is ordained, that none under the degree of an earl may use *fables*.

Bishop says in his *Blossoms*, 1577, speaking of the extravagance of those times, that a *thousand ducates* were sometimes given for “a face of fables.”

his life half a year: But, by'r-lady, he must build churches then:² or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse;³ whose epitaph is, *For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.*⁴

That a *suit of fables* was the magnificent dress of our author's time, appears from a passage in Ben Jonson's *Discoveries*: "Would you not laugh to meet a great counsellor of state, in a flat cap, with his trunk-hose, and a hobby-horse cloak, [See fig. 5. in the plate annexed to *King Henry IV.* P. I. Vol. XII.] and yond haberdasher in a velvet gown trimm'd with *fables*?"

Florio in his *Italian Dictionary*, 1598, thus explains *zibilini*: "The rich furre called fables." — *Sables* is the skin of the fable Martin. See Cotgrave's *French Dict.* 1611: "Sebilline. Martre Sebel. The fable Martin; the beast whose skinne we call *fables*."

MALONE.

² — but he must build churches then:] Such benefactors to society were sure to be recorded by means of the feast-day on which the patron saints and founders of churches were commemorated in every parish. This custom having been long disused, the names of the builders of sacred edifices are no longer known to the vulgar, and are preserved only in antiquarian memoirs. STEEVENS.

³ — suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse:] Amongst the country May-games there was an hobby-horse, which, when the puritanical humour of those times opposed and discredited these games, was brought by the poets and ballad-makers as an instance of the ridiculous zeal of the sectaries: from these ballads Hamlet quotes a line or two. WARBURTON.

⁴ — O, the hobby-horse is forgot.] In *Love's Labour's Lost*, this line is also introduced. In a small black letter book, entitled, *Plays Confuted*, by Stephen Gosson, I find the hobby-horse enumerated in the list of dances: "For the devil (says this author) beside the beautie of the houses, and the stages, sendeth in gearish apparell, maskes, vaulting, tumbling, dauncing of gigges, galiardes, morisces, hobbi-horses," &c. and in Green's *Tu Quoque*, 1614, the same expression occurs: "The other hobby-horse I perceive is not forgotten."

In *TEXNOFAMIA*, or *The Marriage of the Arts*, 1618, is the following stage-direction:

"Enter a hobby-horse, dancing the morrice," &c.

Again, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Women Pleased*:

"Soto. Shall the hobby-horse be forgot then,

"The hopeful hobby-horse, shall he lie founder'd?"

Trumpets sound. The dumb show follows.

Enter a king and a queen, very lovingly; the queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers; she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon, comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the king's ears, and exit. The queen returns; finds the king dead, and makes passionate action. The poisoner, with some two or three mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The poisoner woes the queen with gifts; she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end, accepts his love. [Exeunt.

OPH. What means this, my lord?

HAM. Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.⁵

The scene in which this passage is, will very amply confirm all that Dr. Warburton has said concerning the *hobby-horse*.

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Entertainment for the Queen and Prince at Althorpe*:

“ But see the *hobby-horse* is forgot,
 “ Fool, it must be your lot,
 “ To supply his want with faces
 “ And some other buffoon graces.”

See figure 5, in the plate at the end of the First Part of *King Henry IV.* with Mr. Tollet's observations on it. STEEVENS.

⁵ *Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.*] To *mich* signified, originally, to keep hid and out of sight; and, as such men generally did it for the purposes of lying in wait, it then signified to rob. And in this sense Shakspeare uses the noun, a *micher*, when speaking of Prince Henry amongst a gang of robbers. *Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher? Shall the son of England prove a thief?* And in this sense it is used by Chaucer, in his translation of *Le Roman de la Rose*, where he turns the word *fiere*, (which is *larron*, *voleur*,) by *micher*. WARBURTON.

OPH. Belike, this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter Prologue.

HAM. We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

OPH. Will he tell us what this show meant?

Dr. Warburton is right in his explanation of the word *miching*. So, in *The Raging Turk*, 1631:

"—— wilt thou, envious dotard,

"Strangle my greatness in a *miching* hole?"

Again, in Stanyhurst's *Virgil*, 1582:

"—— wherefore thus vainely in land Lybye *mitche* you?"

The quarto reads — *munching* Mallico. STEEVENS.

The word *miching* is daily used in the West of England for *playing truant*, or sculking about in private for some sinister purpose; and *malicho*, inaccurately written for *malheco*, signifies *mischief*; so that *miching malicho* is *mischief on the watch for opportunity*. When Ophelia asks Hamlet — "What means this?" she applies to him for an explanation of what she had not seen in the show; and not, as Dr. Warburton would have it, the purpose for which the show was contrived. Besides, *malhechor* no more signifies a *poisoner*, than a perpetrator of any other crime. HENLEY.

—— *miching mallecho*;] A secret and wicked contrivance; a concealed wickedness. To *mich* is a provincial word, and was probably once general, signifying to lie hid, or play the truant. In Norfolk *miclers* signify *pilferers*. The signification of *miching* in the present passage may be ascertained by a passage in Decker's *Wonderful Yeare*, 4to. 1603: "Those that could shift for a time, — went most bitterly *miching* and muffled, up and downe, with rue and wormwood stufte into their ears and nostrills."

See also Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598, in v. *Acciapiare*. "To *miche*, to shrug or sneak in some corner, and with pouting and lips to shew some anger." In a subsequent passage we find that the murderer before he poisons the king makes *damnable faces*.

Where our poet met with the word *mallecho*, which in Minshew's Spanish Dictionary, 1617, is defined *malefactum*, I am unable to ascertain. In the folio, the word is spelt *malicho*. *Mallico* [in the quarto] is printed in a distinct character, as a proper name.

MALONE.

HAM. Ay, or any show that you'll show him :
Be not you ashamed to show,⁶ he'll not shame to
tell you what it means.

OPH. You are naught, you are naught ; I'll mark
the play.

PRO. *For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.*

HAM. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

OPH. 'Tis brief, my lord.

HAM. As woman's love.

Enter a King and a Queen.

P. KING. Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart⁷
gone round

Neptune's salt wash, and Tellus' orb'd ground ;⁸
And thirty dozen moons, with borrow'd sheen,⁹
About the world have times twelve thirties been ;
Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands,
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

⁶ — *Be not you ashamed to show, &c.]* The conversation of Hamlet with Ophelia, which cannot fail to disgust every modern reader, is probably such as was peculiar to the young and fashionable of the age of Shakspeare, which was, by no means, an age of delicacy. The poet is, however, blameable ; for extravagance of thought, not indecency of expression, is the characteristic of madness, at least of such madness as should be represented on the scene. STEEVENS.

⁷ — *cart —]* A chariot was anciently so called. Thus, Chaucer, in *The Knight's Tale*, Mr. Tyrwhitt's edit. ver. 2024 :
“ The carter overridden with his cart.” STEEVENS.

⁸ — *orb'd ground ;]* So, also in our author's *Love's Complaint* :
“ Sometimes diverted, their poor balls are tied
“ To the orb'd earth.” STEEVENS.

⁹ — *sheen,]* Splendor, lustre. JOHNSON.

P. QUEEN. So many journeys may the fun and
moon

Make us again count o'er, ere love be done!
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer, and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must:
For women fear too much, even as they love;^a

^a ——— *even as they love;*] Here seems to have been a line lost, which should have rhymed to *love*. JOHNSON.

This line is omitted in the folio. Perhaps a triplet was designed, and then instead of *love*, we should read *lust*. The folio gives the next line thus:

“For women’s fear and love holds quantity.”

STEEVENS.

There is, I believe, no instance of a triplet being used in our author’s time. Some trace of the lost line is found in the quartos, which read:

Either none in neither aught, &c.

Perhaps the words omitted might have been of this import:

Either none they feel, or an excess approve;

In neither aught, or in extremity.

In two preceding passages in the quarto, half a line was inadvertently omitted by the compositor. See p. 142, “*then senseless Ilium, seeming,*” &c. and p. 163, “*thus conscience does make cowards of us all:*” — the words in Italick characters are not found in the quarto. MALONE.

Every critick, before he controverts the assertions of his predecessor, ought to adopt the resolution of Othello:

“I’ll see, before I doubt; what I doubt, prove.”

In Phaer and Twine’s *Virgil*, 1584, the triplets are so frequent, that in two opposite pages of the tenth book, not less than *seven* are to be met with. They are likewise as unsparingly employed in Golding’s *Ovid*, 1587. Mr. Malone, in a note on *The Tempest*, Vol. IV. p. 140, has quoted a passage from this very work, containing one instance of them. In Chapman’s *Homer* they are also used, &c. &c. &c. In *The Tempest*, A& IV. sc. i. Many other examples of them occur in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, A& III. sc. i. as well as in the *Comedy of Errors*, A& II. and III. &c. &c. — and, yet more unluckily for my opponent, the Prologue to the Mock Tragedy, now under consideration, consists of a triplet, which is

And women's fear and love hold quantity;
 In neither aught, or in extremity.
 Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know;
 And as my love is fix'd, my fear is so.³
 Where love is great,⁴ the littlest doubts are fear;
 Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

P. KING. 'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and
 shortly too;

My operant powers⁵ their functions leave to do:
 And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
 Honour'd, belov'd; and, haply, one as kind
 For husband shalt thou —

P. QUEEN. O, confound the rest!
 Such love must needs be treason in my breast:
 In second husband let me be accurst!
 None wed the second, but who kill'd the first.

HAM. That's wormwood.

P. QUEEN. The instances,⁶ that second marriage
 move,
 Are base respects of thrift, but none of love;

our last edition stood at the top of the same page in which he
 supposed "no instance of a triplet being used in our author's time."

STEEVENS.

³ *And as my love is fix'd, my fear is so.*] Cleopatra expresses
 herself much in the same manner, with regard to her grief for
 the loss of Antony:

" — our *size* of sorrow,

" *Proportion'd* to our cause, must be as great

" *As that which makes it.*" THEOBALD.

⁴ *Where love &c.*] These two lines are omitted in the folio.

STEEVENS.

⁵ — operant powers —] *Operant* is active. Shakspeare gives
 it in *Timon of Athens* as an epithet to *poison*. Heywood has like-
 wise used it in his *Royal King and Loyal Subject*, 1637:

" — may my *operant* parts

" Each one forget their office!"

The word is now obsolete. STEEVENS.

⁶ *The instances,*] *The motives.* JOHNSON.

A second time I kill my husband dead,
When second husband kisses me in bed.

P. KING. I do believe, you think what now you
speak ;

But, what we do determine, oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory ;
Of violent birth, but poor validity :
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree ;
But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis, that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt :⁷
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy :⁸
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament ;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
This world is not for aye ; nor 'tis not strange,
That even our loves should with our fortunes
change ;

For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark, his favourite flies ;
The poor advanc'd makes friends of enemies.
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend :
For who not needs, shall never lack a friend ;
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.

⁷ — *what to ourselves is debt ;*] The performance of a resolution in which only the *resolver* is interested, is a debt only to himself, which he may therefore remit at pleasure. JOHNSON.

⁸ *The violence of either grief or joy*
Their own enactures with themselves destroy ;] What grief or joy enact or determine in their violence, is revoked in their abatement. *Enactures* is the word in the quarto ; all the modern editions have *enactors*. JOHNSON.

But, orderly to end where I begun,—
 Our wills, and fates, do so contráry run,
 That our devices still are overthrown;
 Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own:
 So think thou wilt no second husband wed;
 But die thy thoughts, when thy first lord is dead.

P. QUEEN. Nor earth to me give food,⁹ nor heaven light!

Sport and repose lock from me, day, and night!
 To desperation² turn my trust and hope!
 An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!³

⁹ *Nor earth to me give food,*] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio and the late editors read:

Nor earth to give me food,——.

An imperative or optative verb was evidently intended here, as in the following line:

“Sport and repose *lock* from me,” &c. MALONE.

A very similar imprecation,—

“Day, yield me not thy light; nor night, thy rest!” &c. occurs in *King Richard III.* See Vol. XV. p. 444. STEEVENS.

² *To desperation* &c.] This and the following line are omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

³ *An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!*] May my whole liberty and enjoyment be to live on hermit's fare in a prison. *Anchor* is for *anchoret*. JOHNSON.

This abbreviation of the word *anchoret* is very ancient. I find it in the Romance of *Robert the Devil*, printed by Wynkyn de Worde: “We haue robbed and killed nonnes, holy *aunkers*, preeftes, clerkes,” &c. Again, “the foxe will be an *aunker*, for he begynneth to preche.”

Again, in *The Vision of Pierce Plowman*:

“As *ankers* and hermits that hold them in her selles.”

This and the foregoing line are not in the folio. I believe we should read—*anchor's chair*. So, in the second Satire of Hall's fourth book, edit. 1602, p. 18:

“Sit seven yeres pining in an *anchore's cheyre*

“To win some parched shreds of minivere.”

STEEVENS.

The old copies read—*And anchor's cheer*. The correction was made by Mr. Theobald. MALONE.

Each opposite, that blanks the face of joy,
Meet what I would have well, and it destroy!
Both here, and hence, pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

HAM. If she should break it now,——

[To OPHELIA.

P. KING. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me
here a while;

My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep. [*Sleeps.*

P. QUEEN. Sleep rock thy brain;
And never come mischance between us twain!
[*Exit.*

HAM. Madam, how like you this play?

QUEEN. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

HAM. O, but she'll keep her word.

KING. Have you heard the argument? Is there
no offence in't?

HAM. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest;
no offence i'the world.

KING. What do you call the play?

HAM. The mouse-trap.⁴ Marry, how? Tropi-
cally. This play is the image of a murder done in
Vienna: Gonzago is the duke's name;⁵ his wife,

⁴ *The mouse-trap.*] He calls it the *mouse-trap*, because it is

“ —— the thing

“ In which he'll catch the conscience of the king.”

STEEVENS.

⁵ —— *Gonzago is the duke's name;*] Thus all the old copies:
yet in the stage-direction for the dumb show, and the subsequent
entrance, we have “ *Enter a king and queen,*” &c. and in the
latter part of this speech both the quarto and folio read,

“ —— *Lucianus, nephew to the king.*”

This seeming inconsistency however may be reconciled. Though

Baptista: ⁶ you shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work: But what of that? your majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not: Let the gall'd jade wince, ⁷ our withers are unwrung.—

Enter LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king. ⁸

OPH. You are as good as a chorus, my lord. ⁹

HAM. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying. ²

the interlude is the image of the murder of a duke of Vienna, or in other words founded upon that story, the poet might make the principal person of his fable a king. MALONE.

⁶ ——— Baptista:] Baptista is, I think, in Italian, the name always of a man. JOHNSON.

I believe *Battista* is never used singly by the Italians, being uniformly compounded with *Giam* (for *Giovanni*), and meaning, of course, *John the Baptist*. Nothing more was therefore necessary to detect the forgery of Shebbeare's *Letters on the English Nation*, than his ascribing them to *Battista Angeloni*. RITSON.

⁷ Let the gall'd jade wince,] This is a proverbial saying. So, in *Damon and Pythias*, 1582:

“ I know the gall'd horse will soonest wince.” STEEVENS.

⁸ ——— nephew to the king.] i. e. to the king in the play then represented. The modern editors, following Mr. Theobald, read—*nephew to the duke*,—though they have not followed that editor in substituting *duke and dutchess*, for *king and queen*, in the dumb show and subsequent entrance. There is no need of departing from the old copies. See n. 5. MALONE.

⁹ You are as good as a chorus, &c.] The use to which Shakspeare converted the chorus, may be seen in *King Henry V*.

HENLEY.

² Ham. I could interpret &c.] This refers to the interpreter, who formerly sat on the stage at all motions or puppet-shows, and interpreted to the audience.

So, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

“ O excellent motion! O exceeding puppet!

“ Now will he interpret for her.”

Again, in *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit*, 1621: “ ——— It was I

OPH. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

HAM. It would cost you a groaning, to take off my edge.

OPH. Still better, and worse.²

HAM. So you mistake your husbands.³ —Begin, murderer;—leave thy damnable faces, and begin.

that penn'd the moral of Man's wit, the dialogue of Dives, and for seven years' space was absolute *interpreter of the puppets*." STEEVENS.

² *Still better, and worse,*] i. e. better in regard to the wit of your *double entendre*, but worse in respect to the grossness of your meaning. STEEVENS.

³ *So you mistake your husbands.*] Read—*So you must take your husbands*; that is, *for better, for worse*. JOHNSON.

Mr. Theobald proposed the same reading in his *Shakspeare Restored*, however he lost it afterwards. STEEVENS.

So you mistake your husbands.] I believe this to be right: the word is sometimes used in this ludicrous manner. "Your true trick, rascal, (says Ursula in *Bartholomew Fair*,) must be to be ever busie, and *mistake* away the bottles and cans, before they be half drunk off." FARMER.

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Augurs*: "——To *mistake* six torches from the chandry, and give them one."

Again, in *The Elder Brother* of Fletcher:

"I fear he will persuade me to *mistake* him."

Again, in *Chrestoleros*; *Seven bookes [of Epigrams written by T. B. [Thomas Bastard] 1598. Lib. VII. Epig. xviii:*

"Caius hath brought from forraine landes

"A footie wench, with many handes,

"Which doe in goolden letters say

"She is his wife, not stolne away.

"He mought have sav'de, with small discretion,

"Paper, inke, and all confession:

"For none that see'th her face and making,

"Will judge her stolne, but by *mistaking*."

Again, in *Questions of Profitable and Pleasant Concernings*, &c. 1594: "Better I were now and then to suffer his remisse mother to *mistake* a quarter or two of corne, to buy the knave a coat with," &c. STEEVENS.

I believe the meaning is—you do amiss for yourselves to take husbands for the worse. You should take them only for the better.

TOLLIT.

Come:—

——The croaking raven
Doth bellow for revenge.

LUC. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and
time agreeing;

Confederate season, else no creature seeing;
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds⁴ collected,
With Hecat's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magick and dire property,
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[*Pours the poison into the sleeper's ears.*]

HAM. He poisons him i'the garden for his estate.
His name's Gonzago: the story is extant, and writ-
ten in very choice Italian: You shall see anon, how
the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

OPH. The king rises.

HAM. What! frightened with false fire!⁵

QUEEN. How fares my lord?

POL. Give o'er the play.

KING. Give me some light:—away!

POL. Lights, lights, lights!⁶

[*Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO.*]

HAM. Why, let the stricken deer go weep,⁷

The hart ungalled play:

For some must watch, while some must sleep;

Thus runs the world away.—

⁴ —— midnight weeds ——] The force of the epithet—*midnight*, will be best displayed by a corresponding passage in *Macbeth*:

“Root of hemlock, digg'd i'the dark.” STEEVENS.

⁵ *What! frightened with false fire!*] This speech is omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Lights, lights, lights!*] The quartos give this speech to *Polonius*. STEEVENS.

In the folio *All* is prefixed to this speech. MALONE.

⁷ —— *stricken deer go weep,*] See Vol. VIII. p. 208, n. 6.

STEEVENS.

Would not this, fir, and a forest of feathers,⁸ (if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me,⁹) with two Provencial roses on my razed shoes,² get me a fellowship in a cry of players,³ fir?

⁸ *Would not this, fir, and a forest of feathers, &c.*] It appears from Decker's *Guls Hornebooke*, that feathers were much worn on the stage in Shakspeare's time. MALONE.

I believe, since the English stage began, feathers were worn by every company of players that could afford to purchase them.

STEEVENS.

⁹ ——— turn Turk *with me*,] This expression has occurred already in *Much Ado about Nothing*, and I have met with it in several old comedies. So, in Greene's *Tu Quoque*, 1614: "This is to *turn Turk*, from an absolute and most compleat gentleman, to a most absurd, ridiculous, and fond lover." It means, I believe, no more than to change condition fantastically. Again, in Decker's *Honest Whore*, 1635:

"—— tis damnation,

"If you *turn Turk* again."

Perhaps the phrase had its rise from some popular story like that of *Ward* and *Danfiker*, the two famous pirates; an account of whose overthrow was published by A. Barker, 1609; and, in 1612, a play was written on the same subject called *A Christian turn'd Turk*. STEEVENS.

² ——— Provencial roses in my razed shoes,] [Old copies—*provincial*.] Why *provincial* roses? Undoubtedly we should read *Provencial*, or (with the French *ç*) *Provençal*. He means roses of *Provence*, a beautiful species of rose, and formerly much cultivated.

T. WARTON.

They are still more cultivated than any other flower of the same tribe. STEEVENS.

When shoe-strings were worn, they were covered, where they met in the middle, by a ribband, gathered in the form of a rose. So, in an old song:

"Gil-de-Roy was a bonny boy,

"Had roses tull his *shoon*." JOHNSON.

These roses are often mentioned by our ancient dramatick writers.

So, in *The Devil's Law-case*, 1623:

"With over blown roses to hide your gouty ancles."

Again, in *The Roaring Girl*, 1611: "—— many handsome

HOR. Half a share.

legs in filk stockings have villainous splay-feet, for all their great roses."

The reading of the quartos is *raz'd shoes*; that of the folio *rac'd shoes*. *Razed shoes*, may mean *flashed shoes*, i. e. with cuts or openings in them. The poet might have written *raised shoes*, i. e. shoes with *high heels*; such as by adding to the stature, are supposed to increase the dignity of a player. In Stubb's *Anatomie of Abuses*, 1595, there is a chapter on the *corked shoes* in England, "which (he says) beare them up two inches or more from the ground, &c. some of red, blacke, &c. *razed*, carved, cut, and stitched," &c.

Again, in Warner's *Albion's England*, 1602, B. IX. ch. xlvii:

"Then wore they shoes of ease, now of an inch-broad,
Corked high."

Mr. Pope reads—*rayed shoes*, i. e. (as interpreted by Dr. Johnson) "*shoes braided in lines*." Stowe's *Chronicle*, anno 1353, mentions women's hoods *reyed* or striped. *Raie* is the French word for a stripe. Johnson's *Collection of Ecclesiastical Laws* informs us, under the years 1222 and 1353, that in disobedience of the canon, the clergy's shoes were *checquered* with red and green, exceeding long, and variously pinked.

The reading of the quartos may likewise receive additional support. *Bulwer*, in his *Artificial Changeling*, speaks of gallants who pink and *raze* their satten, damask, and Duretto skins. To *raze* and to *race*, alike signify to *streak*. See Minshew's *Dict.* in v. To *rase*. The word, though differently spelt, is used in nearly the same signification in Markham's *Country Farm*, p. 585: "—— baking all (i. e. wafer cakes) together between two irons, having within them many *raced* and checkered draughts after the manner of small squares." STEEVENS.

³ —— a cry of players,] Allusion to a pack of hounds.

WARBURTON.

A pack of hounds was once called a *cry* of hounds. So, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

"—— and well have halloo'd

"To a deep cry of hounds."

Again, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

"—— a cry more tuneable

"Was never hallood to, or cheer'd with horn."

Milton, likewise, has—"A cry of hell-hounds." STEEVENS.

—— a cry of players,] A troop or company of players. So, in *Coriolanus*:

"—— You have made good work,

"You and your cry."

HAM. A whole one, I.⁴

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,⁵

This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here
A very, very—peacock.⁶

Again, in *A strange Horse-race*, by Thomas Decker, 1613
“The last race they ran, (for you must know they ran many,) was
from a cry of serjeants.” MALONE.

⁴ Hor. *Half a share*.

Ham. *A whole one, I.*] It should be, I think,

A whole one;—ay,—

For &c.

The actors in our author's time had not annual salaries as at present. The whole receipts of each theatre were divided into shares, of which the proprietors of the theatre, or *house-keepers* as they were called, had some; and each actor had one or more shares, or part of a share, according to his merit. See *The Account of the Ancient Theatres*, Vol. III. MALONE.

A whole one, I, in familiar language, means no more than—I think myself entitled to a whole one. STEEVENS.

⁵ *O Damon dear*,] Hamlet calls Horatio by this name in allusion to the celebrated friendship between *Damon* and *Pythias*. A play on this subject was written by Richard Edwards, and published in 1582. STEEVENS.

The friendship of Damon and Pythias is also enlarged upon in a book that was probably very popular in Shakspeare's youth, Sir Thomas Elliot's *Governour*, 1553. MALONE.

⁶ *A very, very—peacock*.] This alludes to a fable of the birds choosing a king; instead of the eagle, a peacock. POPE.

The old copies have it *paiock*, *paicocke*, and *pajocke*. I substitute *paddock*, as nearest to the traces of the corrupted reading. I have, as Mr. Pope says, been willing to substitute any thing in the place of his *peacock*. He thinks a fable alluded to, of the birds choosing a king; instead of the eagle, a *peacock*. I suppose, he must mean the fable of Barlandus, in which it is said, the birds, being weary of their state of anarchy, moved for the setting up of a king; and the *peacock* was elected on account of his gay feathers. But, with submission, in this passage of our Shakspeare, there is not the least mention made of the eagle in antithesis to the *peacock*; and it must be by a very uncommon figure, that Jove himself stands in the place of his bird. I think, Hamlet is setting his father's and

HOR. You might have rhymed.

HAM. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

HOR. Very well, my lord.

HAM. Upon the talk of the poisoning,——

HOR. I did very well note him.

HAM. Ah, ha!—Come, some musick; come, the recorders.—

For if the king like not the comedy,

Why then, belike,⁷—he likes it not, perdy.⁸—

uncle's characters in contrast to each other: and means to say, that by his father's death the state was stripp'd of a godlike monarch, and that now in his stead reign'd the most despicable poisonous animal that could be; a mere *paddock* or *toad*. *PAD*, *buso*, *rubeta major*; a toad. This word I take to be of Hamlet's own substituting. The verses, repeated, seem to be from some old ballad; in which, rhyme being necessary, I doubt not but the last verse ran thus:

A very, very——als. THEOBALD.

A *peacock* seems proverbial for a fool. Thus, Gascoigne in his *Weeds*:

“A theefe, a cowarde, and a *peacocke* foole.”

FARMER.

In the last scene of this act, Hamlet, speaking of the King, uses the expression which Theobald would introduce:

“Would from a *paddock*, from a bat, a gib,

“Such dear concernments hide?”

The reading, *peacock*, which I believe to be the true one, was first introduced by Mr. Pope.

Mr. Theobald is unfaithful in his account of the old copies. No copy of authority reads—*paicocke*. The quarto, 1604, has *paiock*; the folio, 1623, *paiocke*.

Shakspeare, I suppose, means, that the king struts about with a false pomp, to which he has no right. See Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1568: “*Pavonnegiare*. To jet up and down, fondly gazing upon himself, as a peacock doth.” MALONE.

⁷ *Why then belike,*] Hamlet was going on to draw the consequence, when the courtiers entered. JOHNSON.

⁸ —— *he likes it not, perdy.*] *Perdy* is a corruption of *par Dieu*,

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Come, some musick.

GUIL. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

HAM. Sir, a whole history.

GUIL. The king, sir,——

HAM. Ay, sir, what of him?

GUIL. Is, in his retirement, marvellous distemper'd.

HAM. With drink, sir?⁹

GUIL. No, my lord, with choler.

HAM. Your wisdom should show itself more richer, to signify this to the doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation, would, perhaps, plunge him into more choler.

GUIL. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

HAM. I am tame, sir:—pronounce.

GUIL. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

HAM. You are welcome.

GUIL. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment: if not, your pardon, and my return, shall be the end of my business.

and is not uncommon in the old plays. So, in *The Play of the Four P's*, 1569:

“ In that, you Palmer, as deputie,

“ May cleerly discharge him, *pardie*.” STEEVENS.

⁹ *With drink, sir?*] Hamlet takes particular care that his uncle's love of drink shall not be forgotten. JOHNSON.

HAM. Sir, I cannot,

GUIL. What, my lord?

HAM. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: But, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter: My mother, you say,——

ROS. Then thus she says; Your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

HAM. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother!—But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? impart.

ROS. She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

HAM. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade² with us?

ROS. My lord, you once did love me.

HAM. And do still, by these pickers and stealers.³

ROS. Good my lord, what is your cause of discontenter? you do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

HAM. Sir, I lack advancement.

ROS. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?⁴

² —— *further trade* ——] Further business; further dealing.

JOHNSON.

³ —— *by these pickers &c.*] By these hands. JOHNSON.

By these hands, says Dr. Johnson; and rightly. But the phrase is taken from our church catechism, where the catechumen, in his duty to his neighbour, is taught to keep his hands from *picking and stealing*. WHALLEY.

⁴ —— *when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?*] See p. 33, n. 6. MALONE.

HAM. Ay, fir, but, *While the grafs grows,—the proverb is something musty.*⁵

*Enter the Players, with Recorders.*⁶

O, the recorders:—let me see one.—To withdraw with you:⁷—Why do you go about to recover the wind of me,⁸ as if you would drive me into a toil?

⁵ *Ay, fir, but, While the grafs grows,—the proverb is something musty.*] The remainder of this old proverb is preserved in Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578:

“ Whylst grafs doth growe, oft starves the feely fleede.”

Again, in *The Paradise of Daintie Devises*, 1578:

“ To whom of old this proverbe well it serves,

“ *While grafs doth growe, the silly horse he starves.*”

Hamlet means to intimate, that whilst he is waiting for the succession to the throne of Denmark, he may himself be taken off by death. MALONE.

⁶ ——— *Recorders.*] i. e. a kind of large flute. See Vol. VII. p. 149, n. 6.

To *record* anciently signified to sing or modulate. STEEVENS.

⁷ *To withdraw with you:*] These last words have no meaning, as they stand; yet none of the editors have attempted to amend them. They were probably spoken to the players, whom Hamlet wished to get rid of:—I therefore should suppose that we ought to read, “ so, withdraw you;” or, “ so withdraw, will you?”

M. MASON.

Here Mr. Malone adds the following stage direction:—[*Taking Guildenstern aside.*] But the foregoing obscure words may refer to some gesture which Guildenstern had used, and which, at first was interpreted by Hamlet into a signal for him to attend the speaker into another room. “ To withdraw with you?” (says he) Is that your meaning? But finding his friends continue to move mysteriously about him, he adds, with some resentment, a question more easily intelligible. STEEVENS.

⁸ ——— *recover the wind of me.*] So, in an ancient MS. play entitled *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*:

“ ——— Is that next?

“ Why, then I have your ladyship *in the wind.*”

STEEVENS.

GUIL. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.⁹

HAM. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

GUIL. My lord, I cannot.

HAM. I pray you.

GUIL. Believe me, I cannot.

HAM. I do beseech you.

GUIL. I know no touch of it, my lord.

HAM. 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages² with your fingers and thumb,³ give it breath

Again, in Churchyard's *Worthiness of Wales*:

" Their cunning can with craft so cloke a troeth,

" That hardly we shall *have them in the winde*,

" To smell them forth or yet their fineness finde."

HENDERSON.

⁹ O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.] i. e. if my duty to the king makes me press you a little, my love to you makes me still more importunate. If that makes me bold, this makes me even unmannerly. WARBURTON.

I believe we should read—*my love is not unmannerly*. My conception of this passage is, that, in consequence of Hamlet's moving to take the recorder, Guildenstern also shifts his ground, in order to place himself *beneath* the prince in his new position. This Hamlet ludicrously calls "*going about to recover the wind*," &c. and Guildenstern may answer properly enough, I think, and like a courtier; "*if my duty to the king makes me too bold in pressing you upon a disagreeable subject, my love to you will make me not unmannerly, in shewing you all possible marks of respect and attention*." TYRWHITT.

² — *ventages* —] The holes of a flute. JOHNSON.

³ — *and thumb*,] The first quarto reads—*with your fingers and the umber*. This may probably be the ancient name for that piece of moveable brass at the end of a flute which is either raised or depressed by the finger. The word *umber* is used by Stowe the chronicler, who, describing a single combat between two knights—says, "*he brast up his umber three times*." Here, the *umber*

with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent musick. Look you, these are the stops.⁴

GUIL. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

HAM. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me? You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much musick, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it

means the visor of the helmet. So, in Spenser's *Faery Queene*, Book III. c. i. ft. 42:

"But the brave maid would not disarmed be,

"But only vented up her *umbriere*,

"And so did let her goodly visage to appere."

Again, Book IV. c. iv:

"And therewith smote him on his *umbriere*."

Again, in the second book of Lidgate on the Trojan War, 1513:

"Thorough the *umber* into Troylus' face." STEEVENS.

If a recorder had a brass key like the *German Flute*, we are to follow the reading of the quarto; for then the thumb is not concerned in the government of the ventages or stops. If a recorder was like a *labourer's pipe*, which has no brass key, but has a stop for the thumb, we are to read—*Govern these ventages with your finger and thumb*. In Cotgrave's Dictionary, *ombre*, *ombrair*, *ombriere*, and *ombrelle* are all from the Latin *umbra*, and signify a shadow, an umbrella, or any thing that shades or hides the face from the sun; and hence they may have been applied to any thing that hides or covers another; as for example, they may have been applied to the brass key that covers the hole in the German flute. So, Spenser used *umbriere* for the visor of the helmet, as Rous's *History of the Kings of England* uses *umbrella* in the same sense.

TOLLET.

⁴ — the stops.] The sounds formed by occasionally stopping the holes, while the instrument is played upon. So, in the Prologue to *King Henry V*:

"Rumour is a pipe—

"And of so easy and so plain a stop," &c. MALONE.

ſpeak, 'Sblood, do you think, I am eaſier to be play'd on than a pipe? Call me what inſtrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

Enter POLONIUS.

God bleſs you, ſir!

POL. My lord, the queen would ſpeak with you and preſently.

HAM. Do you ſee yonder cloud, that's almoſt in ſhape of a camel?

POL. By the maſs, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

HAM. Methinks; it is like a weaſel.⁵

* *Methinks, &c.*] This paſſage has been printed in modern editions thus:

Ham. *Methinks, it is like an ouzle, &c.*

Pol. *It is black like an ouzle.*

The firſt folio reads,—*It is like a weazel.*

Pol. *It is back'd like a weazel*—: and what occaſion for alteration there was, I cannot diſcover. The *weaſel* is remarkable for the length of its *back*; but though I believe a *black weaſel* is not eaſy to be found, yet it is as likely that the cloud ſhould reſemble a *weaſel* in ſhape, as an *ouze* (i. e. black-bird) in colour.

Mr. Tollet obſerves, that we might read—" it is *beck'd* like a weaſel," i. e. weaſel-snouted. So, in *Holinſhed's Deſcription of England*, p. 172: " if he be *wefell-becked*." Quarles uſes this term of reproach in his *Virgin Widow*: " Go you *weazel-snouted*, addle-pated," &c. Mr. Tollet adds, that Milton in his *Lycidas*, calls a promontory *beaked*, i. e. prominent like the *beak* of a bird, or a ſhip. STEEVENS.

Ham. *Methinks it is like a weazel.*

Pol. *It is back'd like a weazel.*] Thus the quarto, 1604, and the folio. In a more modern quarto, that of 1611, *back'd* the original reading, was corrupted into *black*.

Perhaps in the original edition the words *camel* and *weazel* were ſhuffled out of their places. The poet might have intended the dialogue to proceed thus:

POL. It is back'd like a weasel.

HAM. Or, like a whale?

POL. Very like a whale.

HAM. Then will I come to my mother by and by.—They fool me to the top of my bent.⁵—I will come by and by.

POL. I will say so. [Exit POLONIUS.

HAM. By the by is easily said.—Leave me, friends. [Exeunt ROS. GUIL. HOR. &c.

'Tis now the very witching time of night;
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world: Now could I drink hot
blood,

And do such business as the bitter day⁶
Would quake to look on. Soft; now to my mother.—

“Ham. Do you see yonder cloud, that's almost in the shape of a weazel?”

“Pol. By the mass, and 'tis like a weazel, indeed.”

“Ham. Methinks, it is like a camel.”

“Pol. It is back'd like a camel.”

The protuberant back of a camel seems more to resemble a cloud, than the back of a weazel does. MALONE.

⁵ *They fool me to the top of my bent.*] They compel me to play the fool, till I can endure it no longer. JOHNSON.

Perhaps a term in archery; i. e. as far as the bow will admit of being bent without breaking. DOUCE.

⁶ *And do such business as the bitter day—*] Thus the quarto. The folio reads:

And to such bitter business as the day &c. MALONE.

The expression *bitter business* is still in use, and though at present a vulgar phrase, might not have been such in the age of Shakspeare. The *bitter day* is the day rendered hateful or *bitter* by the commission of some act of mischief.

Watts, in his *Logick*, says, “*Bitter* is an equivocal word; there is *bitter wormwood*, there are *bitter words*, there are *bitter enemies*, and a *bitter cold morning*.” It is in short, any thing unpleasing or hurtful. STEEVENS:

O, heart, lose not thy nature ; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom :
Let me be cruel, not unnatural :
I will speak daggers to her,⁷ but use none ;
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites :
How in my words foever she be shent,⁸
To give them seals⁹ never, my soul, consent!

[*Exit.*

S C E N E III.

A Room in the same.

Enter King, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

KING. I like him not ; nor stands it safe with us ;
To let his madness range. Therefore, prepare you ;
I your commission will forthwith despatch,

⁷ *I will speak daggers to her,*] A similar expression occurs in *The Return from Parnassus*, 1606 : " They are pestilent fellows, they speak nothing but *bodkins*." It has been already observed, that a *bodkin* anciently signified a *short dagger*. STEEVENS.

⁸ *— be shent,*] To *shent*, is to reprove harshly, to treat with rough language. So, in *The Coxcomb* of Beaumont and Fletcher :

" — We shall be *shent* soundly." STEEVENS.

See Vol. XVII. p. 414, n. 8. MALONE.

Shent seems to mean something more than reproof, by the following passage from *The Mirror for Magistrates*: Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, is the speaker, and he relates his having betrayed the Duke of Gloucester and his confederates to the King, " for which (says he) they were all tane and *shent*."

Hamlet surely means, " however my mother may be hurt, wounded, or punish'd, by my words, let me never consent" &c.

HENDERSON.

⁹ *To give them seals—*] i. e. put them in execution.

WARBURTON.

And he to England shall along with you:²
 The terms of our estate may not endure
 Hazard so near us, as doth hourly grow
 Out of his lunes.³

GUIL.

We will ourselves provide:

² *I like him not; nor stands it safe with us,
 To let his madness range. Therefore, prepare you;
 I your commission will forthwith despatch,*

And he to England shall along with you:] In *The History of Hamblett*, bl. 1. the king does not adopt this scheme of sending Hamlet to England till after the death of Polonius; and though he is described as doubtful whether Polonius was slain by Hamlet, his apprehension lest he might himself meet the same fate as the old courtier, is assigned as the motive for his wishing the prince out of the kingdom. This at first inclined me to think that this short scene, either from the negligence of the copyist or the printer, might have been misplaced; but it is certainly printed as the author intended, for in the next scene Hamlet says to his mother, "I must to England; you know that?" before the king could have heard of the death of Polonius. MALONE.

³ *Out of his lunes.*] [The folio reads—*Out of his lunacies.*]
 The old quartos,

Out of his brows.

This was from the ignorance of the first editors; as is this unnecessary Alexandrine, which we owe to the players. The poet, I am persuaded, wrote,

— as doth hourly grow

Out of his lunes.

i. e. his *madness, frenzy.* THEOBALD.

I take *brows* to be, properly read, *frows*, which, I think, is a provincial word for *perverse humours*; which being, I suppose, not understood, was changed to *lunacies*. But of this I am not confident. JOHNSON.

I would receive Theobald's emendation, because Shakspeare uses the word *lunes* in the same sense in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Winter's Tale*.

I have met, however, with an instance in support of Dr. Johnson's conjecture;

" — were you but as favourable as you are *frowish* —."

Tully's Love, by Greene, 1616.

Perhaps, however, Shakspeare designed a metaphor from horned

Most holy and religious fear it is,
To keep those many many bodies safe,
That live, and feed, upon your majesty.

Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound,
With all the strength and armour of the mind,
To keep itself from 'noyance; but much more
That spirit, upon whose weal⁴ depend and rest
The lives of many. The cease of majesty

cattle, whose powers of being dangerous increase with the growth
of their brows. STEEVENS.

The two readings of *brows* and *lunes*—when taken in connexion with the passages referred to by Mr. Steevens, in *The Winter's Tale* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, plainly figure forth the image under which the King apprehended danger from Hamlet:—viz. that of a bull, which, in his frenzy, might not only gore, but push him from his throne.—“The hazard that hourly grows out of his BROWS” (according to the quartos) corresponds to “*the shoots from the ROUGH PASH*,” [that is *the TUFTED PROTUBERANCE on the head of a bull, from whence his horns spring*] alluded to in *The Winter's Tale*; whilst the imputation of impending danger to “*his LUNES*” (according to the other reading) answers as obviously to the jealous fury of the husband that thinks he has detected the infidelity of his wife. Thus, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: “Why woman, your husband is in his old *lunes*—he so takes on yonder with my husband; so rails against all married mankind; so curses all Eve's daughters, and so buffets himself on the *forehead*, crying peer out! peer out! that any *madness*, I ever yet beheld, seem'd but tameness, civility, and patience, to this distemper he is now in.” HENLEY.

Shakspeare probably had here the following passage in *The History of Hamblett*, bl. 1. in his thoughts: “*Fengon* could not content himselfe, but still his minde gave him that the *foole* [*Hamlet*] would play him *some trick of legerdemaine*. And in that conceit seeking to be rid of him, determined to find the meanes to do it, by the aid of a stranger; making the king of England minister of his massacrous resolution, to whom he purposed to send him.”

MALONE.

⁴ *That spirit, upon whose weal—*] So, the quarto. The folio gives,

That spirit, upon whose spirit—. STEEVENS.

Dies not alone; but, like a gulf, doth draw
 What's near it, with it: it is a massy wheel,⁵
 Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
 To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
 Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which, when it falls,
 Each small annexment, petty consequence,
 Attends the boist'rous ruin. Never alone
 Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

KING. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;
 age;

For we will fetters put upon this fear,
 Which now goes too free-footed.

ROS. GUIL.

We will haste us.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

Enter POLONIUS.

POL. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet;
 Behind the arras I'll convey myself,⁶
 To hear the process; I'll warrant, she'll tax him
 home:

And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
 'Tis meet, that some more audience, than a mother,
 Since nature makes them partial,⁷ should o'erhear

⁵ ——— *it is a massy wheel,*] Thus the folio. The quarto reads,
 ——— *Or it is &c.* MALONE.

⁶ *Behind the arras I'll convey myself,*] See Vol. XII. p. 295,
 n. 9. STEEVENS.

The arras-hangings in Shakspeare's time, were hung at such a
 distance from the walls, that a person might easily stand behind
 them unperceived. MALONE.

⁷ *Since nature makes them partial, &c.*]

“ ——— Matres omnes filiis

“ In peccato adjutrices, auxilii in paterna injuria

“ Solent esse——.” *Ter. Heaut. Act V. sc. ii.*

STEEVENS.

The speech, of vantage.⁸ Fare you well, my liege:
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.

KING.

Thanks, dear my lord.

[Exit POLONIUS.]

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murder!—Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will;⁹
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens,
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy,
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer, but this two-fold force,—
To be forestalled, ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd, being down? Then I'll look up;
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder!—

⁸ — of vantage.] By some opportunity of secret observation.

WARBURTON.

⁹ *Though inclination be as sharp as will;*] Dr. Warburton would read,

Though inclination be as sharp as th' ill.

The old reading is—as sharp as will. STEEVENS.

I have followed the earlier emendation of Mr. Theobald, received by Sir T. Hanmer: i. e. as *'twill*. JOHNSON.

Will is command, direction. Thus, *Ecclesiasticus*, xliii. 16: “— and at his *will* the south wind bloweth.” The King says, his mind is in too great confusion to pray, even though his *inclination* were as strong as the *command* which requires that duty. STEEVENS.

What the King means to say, is, “That though he was not only *willing* to pray, but *strongly inclined* to it, yet his intention was defeated by his guilt. M. MASON.

That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
 Of those effects for which I did the murder,
 My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
 May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?²
 In the corrupted currents of this world,
 Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
 And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
 Buys out the law: But 'tis not so above:
 There is no shuffling, there the action lies
 In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
 To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
 Try what repentance can: What can it not?
 Yet what can it, when one can not repent?³
 O wretched state! O bosom, black as death!
 O limed soul;⁴ that, struggling to be free,
 Art more engag'd! Help, angels, make assay!
 Bow, stubborn knees! and, heart, with strings of
 steel,
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe;
 All may be well! [Retires, and kneels.]

² *May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?*] He that does not amend what can be amended, retains his offence. The King kept the crown from the right heir. JOHNSON.

A similar passage occurs in *Philaster*, where the King, who had usurped the crown of Sicily, and is praying to heaven for forgiveness, says,

" ————— But how can I
 " Look to be heard of gods, that must be just,
 " Praying upon the ground I hold by wrong."

M. MASON.

³ *Yet what can it, when one can not repent?*] What can repentance do for a man that cannot be penitent, for a man who has only part of penitence, distress of conscience, without the other part, resolution of amendment? JOHNSON.

⁴ *O limed soul;*] This alludes to *bird-lime*. Shakspeare uses the same word again, in *King Henry VI. Part II*:

" Madam, myself have lim'd a bush for her." STEEVENS.

Enter HAMLET.

HAM. Now might I do it, pat, now he is praying;⁵

And now I'll do't;—And so he goes to heaven:

And so am I reveng'd? That would be scann'd:⁶

A villain kills my father; and, for that,

I, his sole son, do this same villain send⁷

To heaven.

Why, this is hire and salary,⁸ not revenge.

He took my father grossly, full of bread;

With all his crimes broad blown,⁹ as flush as May;

And, how his audit stands, who knows, save heaven?¹⁰

But, in our circumstance and course of thought,

⁵ — pat, now he is praying;] Thus the folio. The quartos read—but now, &c. STEEVENS.

⁶ — That would be scann'd:] i. e. that should be considered, estimated. STEEVENS.

⁷ I, his sole son, do this same villain send —] The folio reads — foule son, a reading apparently corrupted from the quarto. The meaning is plain. I, his only son, who am bound to punish his murderer. JOHNSON.

⁸ — hire and salary,] Thus the folio. The quartos read—base and silly. STEEVENS.

⁹ He took my father grossly, full of bread; With all his crimes broad blown,] The uncommon expression, full of bread, our poet borrowed from the sacred writings: "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." Ezekiel, xvi. 49. MALONE.

¹⁰ And, how his audit stands, who knows, save heaven?] As it appears from the Ghost's own relation that he was in purgatory, Hamlet's doubt could only be how long he had to continue there. RITSON.

'Tis heavy with him: And am I then reveng'd,
To take him in the purging of his soul.
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
No.

Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:³
When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage;
Or in the incestuous pleasures of his bed;⁴
At gaming, swearing;⁵ or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't:
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven;⁶
And that his soul may be as damn'd, and black,
As hell, whereto it goes.⁷ My mother stays:
This phyfick but prolongs thy sickly days. [Exit.

³ *Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:]* To *hent* is used by Shakspeare for, to seize, to catch, to lay hold on. *Hent* is, therefore, *hold*, or *seizure*. Lay hold on him, sword, at a more horrid time. JOHNSON.

See Vol. VI. p. 180, n. 6. STEEVENS.

⁴ *When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage;
Or in the incestuous pleasures of his bed;]* So, in Marston's *In-
fatiate Countess*, 1603:

“ Didst thou not kill him drunk ?

“ Thou shouldst, or in th' embraces of his lust.”

STEEVENS.

⁵ *At gaming, swearing;]* Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads—*At game, a swearing; &c.* MALONE.

⁶ — *that his heels may kick at heaven;]* So, in Heywood's *Silver Age*, 1613:

“ Whose heels tript up, kick'd gainst the firmament.”

STEEVENS.

⁷ *As hell, whereto it goes.]* This speech, in which Hamlet, represented as a virtuous character, is not content with taking blood for blood, but contrives damnation for the man that he would punish, is too horrible to be read or to be uttered. JOHNSON.

This speech of Hamlet's, as Johnson observes, is horrible indeed; yet some moral may be extracted from it, as all his subsequent calamities were owing to this savage refinement of revenge.

M. MASON.

That a sentiment so infernal should have met with imitators, may excite surprize; and yet the same fiend-like disposition is

The King rises, and advances.

KING. My words fly up, my thoughts remain below :

Words, without thoughts, never to heaven go.

[*Exit.*

shown by Lodowick, in Webster's *White Devil*, or *Vittoria Corom-bona*, 1612 ;

" ————— to have poison'd

" The handle of his racket. O, that, that! —

" That while he had been bandying at tennis,

" He might have sworn himself to hell, and struck

" *His soul into the hazard!*"

Again, in *The Honest Lawyer*, by S. S. 1616 :

" I then should strike his body with his soul,

" And sink them both together."

Again, in the third of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Four Plays in One*:

" No ; take him dead drunk now, *without repentance.*"

STEEVENS.

The same horrid thought has been adopted by Lewis Machin, in *The Dumb Knight*, 1633 :

" Nay, but be patient, smooth your brow a little,

" And you shall take them as they clip each other :

" Even in the height of sin ; then damn them both,

" And let them sink before they ask God pardon,

" That your revenge may stretch unto their souls."

MALONE.

I think it not improbable, that when Shakspeare put this horrid sentiment into the mouth of Hamlet, he might have recollected the following story : " One of these monsters meeting his enemy unarmed, threatened to kill him, if he denied not God, his power, and essential properties, viz. his mercy, suffrance, &c. the which, when the other, desiring life, pronounced with great horror, kneeling upon his knees ; the bravo cried out, *nowe will I kill thy body and soule*, and at that instant thrust him through with his rapier."

Brief Discourse of the Spanish State, with a Dialogue annexed intitled Philobasilis, 4to. 1590, p. 14. REED.

A similar story is told in *The Turkish Spy*, Vol. III. p. 243.

MALONE.

S C E N E IV.

Another Room in the same.

Enter Queen and POLONIUS.

POL. He will come straight. Look, you lay
home to him :
Tell him, his pranks have been too broad to bear
with ;
And that your grace hath screen'd and flood be-
tween
Much heat and him. I'll silence me e'en here.⁷
Pray you, be round with him.⁸

QUEEN. I'll warrant you ;
Fear me not : — withdraw, I hear him coming.
[POLONIUS *hides himself.*⁹

⁷ *I'll silence me e'en here.*] *I'll silence me even here, is, I'll use no more words.* JOHNSON.

⁸ — *be round with him.*] Here the folio interposes, improperly I think, the following speech :

“ *Ham. [Within.] Mother, mother, mother.*” STEEVENS.

⁹ *Polonius hides himself.*] The concealment of Polonius in the Queen's chamber, during the conversation between Hamlet and his mother, and the manner of his death, were suggested by the following passage in *The History of Hamblet*, bl. let. fig. D 1 :
“ The counsellour entered secretly into the queene's chamber, and there *hid himselfe behinde the arras*, and long before the queene and Hamlet came thither ; who being craftie and pollitique, as soone as he was within the chamber, doubting some treason, and fearing if he should speake severely and wisely to his mother, touching his secret practises, hee should be understood, and by that means intercepted, used his ordinary manner of dissimulation, and began to come [*r. crow*] like a cocke, beating with this arms (in such manner as cockes use to strike with their wings) upon the hangings of the chamber ; whereby feeling something stirring under them, he cried, *a rat, a rat*, and presently drawing his sworde, thrust it into the

Enter HAMLET.

HAM. Now, mother; what's the matter?

QUEEN. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAM. Mother, you have my father much offended.

QUEEN. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAM. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

QUEEN. Why, how now, Hamlet?

HAM. What's the matter now?

QUEEN. Have you forgot me?

HAM. No, by the rood, not so:
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;
And, — 'would it were not so!² — you are my mother.

QUEEN. Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.

HAM. Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;

You go not, till I set you up a glass

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

QUEEN. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?

Help, help, ho!

POL. [*Behind.*] What, ho! help!

hangings; which done, pulled the counsellour (half-deade) out by the heeles, made an ende of killing him; and, being flaine, cut his body in pieces, which he caused to be boyled, and then cast it into an open vault or privie." MALONE.

² And — 'would it were not so!'] The folio reads,

But would you were not so. HENDERSON.

HAM.

How now! a rat?³[*Draws.*

Dead, for a ducat, dead.

[*HAMLET makes a pass through the arras.*POL. [*Behind.*]

O, I am slain.

[*Falls, and dies.*

QUEEN. O me, what hast thou done?

HAM.

Nay, I know not:

Is it the king?

[*Lifts up the arras, and draws forth* POLONIUS.

QUEEN. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

HAM. A bloody deed; — almost as bad, good mother,

As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

QUEEN. As kill a king!⁴

³ *How now! a rat?*] This (as Dr. Farmer has observed) is an expression borrowed from *The History of Hamlet*, a translation from the French of Belleforest. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Queen. As kill a king!*] This exclamation may be considered as some hint that the queen had no hand in the murder of Hamlet's father. STEEVENS.

It has been doubted whether Shakspeare intended to represent the queen as accessory to the murder of her husband. The surprise she here expresses at the charge seems to tend to her exculpation. Where the variation is not particularly marked, we may presume, I think, that the poet intended to tell his story as it had been told before. The following extract therefore from *The History of Hamlet*, bl. 1. relative to this point, will probably not be unacceptable to the reader: "Fengon [the king in the present play] boldened and encouraged by such impunitie, durst venture to couple himself in marriage with her, whom he used as his concubine during good Horvendille's life; in that sort spotting his name with a double vice, incestuous adulterie, and paracide murther. — This adulterer and infamous murtherer slandered his dead brother, that he would have slain his wife, and that hee by chance finding him on the point ready to do it, in defence of the lady, had slain him. The unfortunate and wicked woman that had received the honour to be the wife of one of the valiantest and wisest princes in the North, imbased herselfe in such

HAM. Ay, lady, 'twas my word. —
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
[To POLONIUS.]

vile sort as to falsifie her faith unto him, and, which is worse, to marrie him that had bin the tyrannous murtherer of her lawful husband; *which made diverse men think that she had been the causer of the murther, thereby to live in her adulterie without controule.*" *Hysl. of Hamb. fig. C 1. 2.*

In the conference however with her son, on which the present scene is founded, she strongly asserts her innocence with respect to this fact:

"I know well, my sonne, that I have done thee great wrong in marrying with Fengon, the cruel tyrant and murtherer of thy father, and my loyal spouse; but when thou shalt consider the small means of resistance, and the treason of the palace, with the little cause of confidence we are to expect, or hope for, of the courtiers, all wrought to his will; as also the power he made ready if I should have refused to like him; thou wouldst rather excuse, than accuse me of lasciviousness or inconstancy, much less offer me that wrong to *suspect that ever thy mother Geruth once consented to the death and murther of her husband: swearing unto thee by the majestie of the gods, that if it had layne in me to have resisted the tyrant, although it had beene with the losse of my blood, yea and of my life, I would surely have saved the life of my lord and husband.*" *Ibid. fig. D 4.*

It is observable, that in the drama neither the king or queen make so good a defence. Shakspeare wished to render them as odious as he could, and therefore has not in any part of the play furnished them with even the semblance of an excuse for their conduct.

Though the inference already mentioned may be drawn from the surprize which our poet has here made the queen express at being charged with the murder of her husband, it is observable that when the player-queen in the preceding scene says,

"In second husband let me be accurst!

"None wed the second, but who kill'd the first,"

he has made Hamlet exclaim — "*that's wormwood.*" The prince, therefore, both from the expression and the words addressed to his mother in the present scene, must be supposed to think her guilty. — Perhaps after all this investigation, the truth is, that Shakspeare himself meant to leave the matter in doubt. MALONE.

I know not in what part of this tragedy the king and queen could have been expected to enter into a vindication of their mutual conduct. The former indeed is rendered contemptible as well as

If it be made of penetrable stuff;
 If damned custom have not braz'd it so,
 That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

QUEEN. What have I done, that thou dar'st wag
 thy tongue
 In noise so rude against me?

HAM. Such an act,
 That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;
 Calls virtue, hypocrite; takes off the rose⁵

⁵ — takes off the rose &c.] Alluding to the custom of wearing roses on the side of the face. See a note on a passage in *King John*, Act I. WARBURTON.

I believe Dr. Warburton is mistaken; for it must be allowed that there is a material difference between an ornament worn on the *forehead*, and one exhibited on the *side of the face*. Some have understood these words to be only a metaphorical enlargement of the sentiment contained in the preceding line:

“ — blurs the grace and *blush* of modesty:”
 but as the *forehead* is no proper situation for a *blush* to be displayed in, we may have recourse to another explanation.

It was once the custom for those who were betrothed, to wear some flower as an external and conspicuous mark of their mutual engagement. So, in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* for April:

“ Bring coronations and *sops in wine*,

“ Worn of paramours.”

Lyte, in his *Herbal*, 1578, enumerates *sops in wine* among the smaller kind of single gilliflowers or pinks.

Figure 4, in the *Morrice-dance* (a plate of which is annexed to the First Part of *King Henry IV.*) has a flower fixed on his *forehead*, and seems to be meant for the *paramour* of the female character. The flower might be designed for a *rose*, as the colour of it is red in the painted glass, though its form is expressed with as little adherence to nature as that of the *marygold* in the hand of the lady. It may, however, conduct us to affix a new meaning to the lines in question. This flower, as I have since discovered, is exactly shaped like the *sops in wine*, now called the *Deptford Pink*.

An Address “To all Judiciall censurers,” prefixed to *The Whipper of the Satyre his pennance in a white Sheete, or the Beadle's Confutation*, 1601, begins likewise thus:

“ Brave spirited gentles, on whose comely front

“ The *rose* of favour sits majestically, —.”

From the fair forehead of an innocent love;
 And sets a blister there! makes marriage vows
 As false as dicers' oaths : O, such a deed,
 As from the body of contraction⁶ plucks
 The very soul ; and sweet religion makes
 A rhapsody of words : Heaven's face doth glow ;
 Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
 With tristful visage, as against the doom,
 Is thought-sick at the act.⁷

Sets a *blister* there, has the same meaning as in *Measure for Measure* :

" Who falling in the flaws of her own youth,
 Hath *blister'd* her report."

See Vol. VI. p. 73 and 74, n. 9. STEEVENS.

I believe, by the *rose* was only meant the *rosate* hue. The forehead certainly appears to us an odd place for the hue of innocence to dwell on, but Shakspeare might place it there with as much propriety as a *smile*. In *Troilus and Cressida* we find these lines :

" So rich advantage of a promis'd glory,
 As *smiles* upon the *forehead* of this action."

That part of the forehead which is situated between the eyebrows, seems to have been considered by our poet as the seat of innocence and modesty. So, in a subsequent scene :

" ——— brands the harlot,
 Even here, between the *chaste* unsmirched brow
 Of my true mother." MALONE.

In the foregoing quotation from *Troilus and Cressida*, I understand that the *forehead* is *smiled upon by advantage*, and not that the *forehead* is itself the *smiler*. Thus, says Laertes in the play before us :

" Occasion *smiles upon* a second leave."

But it is not the *leave* that *smiles*, but *occasion* that *smiles upon it*.

In the subsequent passage, our author had no choice ; for having alluded to that part of the face which was anciently branded with a mark of shame, he was compelled to place his token of innocence in a corresponding situation. STEEVENS.

⁶ — from the body of contraction —] *Contraction* for marriage contract. WARBURTON.

⁷ — Heaven's face doth glow ;
 Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
 With tristful visage, as against the doom,
 Is thought-sick at the act.] If any sense can be found here, it is this. The sun glows [and does it not always?] and the very

QUEEN. Ah me, what act,
That roars so loud,⁸ and thunders in the index?⁹

solid mass of earth has a trifful visage, and is thought-sick. All this is sad stuff. The old quarto reads much nearer to the poet's sense:

*Heaven's face does glow,
O'er this solidity and compound mass,
With heated visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.*

From whence it appears, that Shakspeare wrote,
*Heaven's face doth glow,
O'er this solidity and compound mass,
With trifful visage; and, as 'gainst the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.*

This makes a fine sense, and to this effect. The sun looks upon our globe, the scene of this murder, with an angry and mournful countenance, half hid in eclipse, as at the day of doom.

WARBURTON.

The word *heated*, though it agrees well enough with *glow*, is, I think, not so striking as *trifful*, which was, I suppose, chosen at the revival. I believe the whole passage now stands as the author gave it. Dr. Warburton's reading restores two improprieties, which Shakspeare, by his alteration, had removed. In the first, and in the new reading, *Heaven's face glows with trifful visage*; and, *Heaven's face is thought-sick*. To the common reading there is no just objection. JOHNSON.

I am strongly inclined to think that the reading of the quarto, 1604, is the true one. In Shakspeare's licentious diction, the meaning may be,—The face of heaven doth glow with heated visage over the earth: and heaven, as against the day of judgement, is thought-sick at the act.

Had not our poet St. Luke's description of the last day in his thoughts?—"And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking on those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken," &c. MALONE.

⁸ *That roars so loud,*] The meaning is,—What is this act, of which the discovery, or mention, cannot be made, but with this violence of clamour? JOHNSON.

⁹ — and thunders in the index?] Mr. Edwards observes, that the indexes of many old books were at that time inserted at the beginning, instead of the end, as is now the custom. This observation I have often seen confirmed.

HAM. Look here, upon this picture, and on this;²
 The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
 See, what a grace was seated on this brow:
 Hyperion's curls;³ the front of Jove himself;

So, in *Othello*, A& II. sc. vii: "—— an *inden* and obscure *prologue* to the history of lust and foul thoughts." STEEVENS.

Bullokar in his *Expositor*, 8vo. 1616, defines an *Index* by "A *table* in a booke. The *table* was almost always *prefixed* to the books of our poet's age. Indexes, in the sense in which we now understand the word, were very uncommon. MALONE.

² Look here, upon this picture, and on this;] It is evident from the following words,

"A *station*, like the herald Mercury," &c.

that these pictures, which are introduced as miniatures on the stage, were meant for whole lengths, being part of the furniture of the Queen's closet:

"—— like Maia's son he stood,

"And shook his plumes." *Paradise Lost*, Book V.

Hamlet, who, in a former scene, has censured those who gave "forty, fifty, a hundred ducats apiece" for his uncle's "picture in little," would hardly have condescended to carry such a thing in his pocket. STEEVENS.

The introduction of miniatures in this place appears to be a modern innovation. A print prefixed to Rowe's edition of *Hamlet*, published in 1709, proves this. There, the two royal portraits are exhibited as half-lengths, hanging in the Queen's closet; and either thus, or as whole-lengths, they probably were exhibited from the time of the original performance of this tragedy to the death of Betterton. To half-lengths, however, the same objection lies, as to miniatures. MALONE.

We may also learn, that from this print the trick of kicking the chair down on the appearance of the Ghost, was adopted by modern Hamlets from the practice of their predecessors. STEEVENS.

³ Hyperion's curls;] It is observable that *Hyperion* is used by Spenser with the same error in quantity. FARMER.

I have never met with an earlier edition of Marston's *Insatiate Countess* than that in 1603. In this the following lines occur, which bear a close resemblance to Hamlet's description of his father:

"A donative he hath of every god;

"Apollo gave him locks, Jove his high front."

—— dignos & Apolline crines.

Ovid's Metam. Book III. thus translated by Golding, 1587:

"And haire that one might worthily Apollo's haire it deeme."

STEEVENS.

An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
 A station like the herald Mercury,⁴
 New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;⁵
 A combination, and a form, indeed,
 Where every god did seem to set his seal,
 To give the world assurance of a man:
 This was your husband.—Look you now, what follows:

Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
 Blasting his wholesome brother.⁶ Have you eyes?

⁴ *A station like the herald Mercury, &c.] Station in this instance does not mean the spot where any one is placed, but the act of standing. So, in Antony and Cleopatra, A& III. sc. iii:*

“ Her motion and her station are as one.”

On turning to Mr. Theobald's first edition, I find that he had made the same remark, and supported it by the same instance. The observation is necessary, for otherwise the compliment designed to the attitude of the king, would be bestowed on the place where Mercury is represented as standing. STEEVENS.

In the first scene of *Timon of Athens*, the poet, admiring a picture, introduces the same image:

“ — How this grace

“ Speaks his own standing!” MALONE.

I think it not improbable that Shakspeare caught this image from Phaer's translation of Virgil, (Fourth *Æneid*,) a book that without doubt he had read:

“ And now approaching neere, the top he seeth and mighty limes

“ Of Atlas, mountain tough, that heaven on boystrous shoulders beares;—

“ There first on ground with wings of might doth Mercury arrive,

“ Then down from thence right over seas himselfe doth headlong drive.”

In the margin are these words: “ The description of Mercury's journey from heaven, along the mountain Atlas in Afrike, highest on earth.” MALONE.

⁵ — heaven-kissing hill;] So, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

“ You towers whose wanton tops do buss the clouds.”

STEEVENS.

⁶ — like a mildew'd ear,

Blasting his wholesome brother.] This alludes to Pharaoh's Dream, in the 41st chapter of *Genesis*. STEEVENS.

Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
 And batten⁷ on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
 You cannot call it, love: for, at your age,
 The hey-day in the blood⁸ is tame, it's humble,
 And waits upon the judgement; And what judge-
 ment

Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you
 have,
 Else, could you not have motion:⁹ But, sure, that
 sense

⁷ — batten —] i. e. to grow fat. So, in *Claudius Tiberius Nero*, 1607:

“ ——— and for milk

“ I batten'd was with blood.”

Again, in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, 1633:

“ ——— make her round and plump,

“ And batten more than you are aware.”

Bat is an ancient word for *increase*. Hence the adjective *batful*, so often used by Drayton in his *Polyolbion*. STEEVENS.

⁸ *The hey-day in the blood* —] This expression occurs in Ford's *'Tis Pity she's a Whore*, 1633:

“ ——— must

“ The hey-day of your luxury be fed

“ Up to a surfeit?” STEEVENS.

⁹ — Sense, sure, you have,

Else, could you not have motion:] But from what philosophy our editors learnt this, I cannot tell. Since *motion* depends so little upon *sense*, that the greatest part of *motion* in the universe, is amongst bodies devoid of *sense*. We should read:

Else, could you not have notion,

i. e. intellect, reason, &c. This alludes to the famous peripatetic principle of *Nil fit in intellectu, quod non fuerit in sensu*. And how fond our author was of applying, and alluding to, the principles of this philosophy, we have given several instances. The principle in particular has been since taken for the foundation of one of the noblest works that these latter ages have produced.

WARBURTON.

The whole passage is wanting in the folio; and which soever of the readings be the true one, the poet was not indebted to this boasted philosophy for his choice. STEEVENS.

Sense is sometimes used by Shakspeare for sensation or *sensual*

Is apoplex'd : for madness would not err ;
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd,
 But it reserv'd some quantity of choice,
 To serve in such a difference. What devil was't,
 That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind? ²
 Eyes without feeling, ³ feeling without sight,
 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling fans all,
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense
 Could not so mope. ⁴
 O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
 If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones, ⁵

appetite; as *motion* is for the effect produced by the impulse of nature. Such, I think, is the signification of these words here.

So, in *Measure for Measure*:

" ——— she speaks, and 'tis

" Such sense, that my *sense* breeds with it."

Again, more appositely in the same play, where both the words occur:

" ——— One who never feels

" The wanton flings and motions of the *sense*."

So, in Brathwaite's *Survey of Histories*, 1614; "These *continent* relations will reduce the straggling motions to a more settled and retired harbour."

Sense has already been used in this scene, for *sensation*:

" That it be proof and bulwark against *sense*."

MALONE.

² ——— at hoodman-blind?] This is, I suppose, the same as *blindman's-buff*. So, in *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon*, 1638:

" Why should I play at hood-man blind?"

Again, in *Two lamentable Tragedies in One, the One a Murder of Master Beech*, &c. 1601:

" Pick out men's eyes, and tell them that's the sport

" Of hood-man blind." STEEVENS.

³ *Eyes without feeling*, &c.] This and the three following lines are omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

⁴ *Could not so mope*.] i. e. could not exhibit such marks of stupidity. The same word is used in *The Tempest*, sc. ult:

" And were brought moping hither. STEEVENS.

⁵ ——— Rebellious hell,

If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones, &c.] Thus the old

To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
 And melt in her own fire : proclaim no shame,
 When the compulsive ardour gives the charge
 Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
 And reason panders will.⁶

QUEEN. O Hamlet, speak no more :
 Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul ;
 And there I see such black and grained' spots,
 As will not leave their tinct.⁸

copies. Shakspeare calls *mutineers*,—*mutines*, in a subsequent scene.
 STEEVENS.

So, in *Othello* :

“ ——— this hand of yours requires
 “ A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,
 “ Much castigation, exercise devout ;
 “ For here's young and sweating devil here,
 “ That commonly rebels.”

To *mutine* for which the modern editors have substituted *mutiny*, was the ancient term, signifying to rise in *mutiny*. So, in Knolles's *History of the Turks*, 1603 : “ The Janisaries—became wonderfully discontented, and began to *mutine* in diverse places of the citie.”
 MALONE.

⁶ ——— *reason* panders will.] So, the folio, I think rightly ; but the reading of the quarto is defensible :

——— *reason* pardons will. JOHNSON.

Panders was certainly Shakspeare's word. So, in *Venus and Adonis* :

“ When *reason* is the bawd to lust's abuse.” MALONE.

⁷ ——— *grained* —] Died in grain. JOHNSON.

I am not quite certain that the epithet—*grained* is justly interpreted. Our author employs the same adjective in *The Comedy of Errors* :

“ Though now this *grained* face of mine be hid,” &c.
 and in this instance the allusion is most certainly to the furrows in the *grain* of wood.

Shakspeare might therefore design the Queen to say, that her spots of guilt were not merely superficial, but indented.—A passage, however, in *Twelfth Night*, will sufficiently authorize Dr. Johnson's explanation : “ 'Tis in grain, fir, 'twell endure wind and weather.”

STEEVENS.

⁸ *As will not leave their tinct.*] To leave is to part with, give up, resign. So, in *The Two Gentleman of Verona* :

HAM. Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed ;⁹
Stew'd in corruption ; honeying, and making love
Over the nasty stye ;——

QUEEN. O, speak to me no more ;
These words like daggers enter in mine ears ;
No more, sweet Hamlet.

HAM. A murderer, and a villain :
A slave, that is not twentieth part the tythe
Of your precedent lord :—a vice of kings :^a
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule ;
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,²
And put it in his pocket !

“ It seems, you lov'd her not, to *leave* her token.”

The quartos read :

As will leave there their tinct. STEEVENS.

⁹ —— enseamed *bed* ;] Thus the folio : i. e. *greasy* bed.

JOHNSON.

Thus also the quarto, 1604. Beaumont and Fletcher use the word *inseamed* in the same sense, in the third of their *Four Plays in One* :

“ His leachery *inseam'd* upon him.”

In *The Book of Haukyng*, &c. bl. l. no date, we are told that

“ *Ensayme* of a hauke is the *grece*.”

In some places it means hogs' lard, in others, the grease or oil with which clothiers besmear their wool to make it draw out in spinning.

Incestuous is the reading of the quarto, 1611. STEEVENS.

In the West of England, the *inside fat* of a goose, when dissolved by heat, is called its *seam* ; and Shakspeare has used the word in the same sense in his *Troilus and Cressida* :

“ ——— shall the proud lord,

“ That bastes his arrogance with his own *seam*.”

HENLEY.

² —— *vice of kings* :] A low mimick of kings. The vice is the fool of a farce ; from whence the modern *punch* is descended.

JOHNSON.

² *That from a shelf* &c.] This is said not unmeaningly, but to

QUEEN.

No more.

Enter Ghost.

HAM.

A king

Of shreds and patches:⁴—

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
 You heavenly guards!—What would your gracious
 figure?

QUEEN. Alas, he's mad.

HAM. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
 That, laps'd in time and passion,⁵ lets go by
 The important acting of your dread command?
 O, say!

GHOST. Do not forget: This visitation
 Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
 But, look! amazement on thy mother sits:
 O, step between her and her fighting soul;
 Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works;⁶
 Speak to her, Hamlet.

HAM. How is it with you, lady?

QUEEN. Alas, how is't with you?
 That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
 And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?

show, that the usurper came not to the crown by any glorious villainy that carried danger with it, but by the low cowardly theft of a common pilferer. WARBURTON.

⁴ *A king*

Of shreds and patches:] This is said, pursuing the idea of the vice of kings. The vice was dressed as a fool, in a coat of party-coloured patches. JOHNSON.

⁵ — *laps'd in time and passion,]* That, having suffered time to slip, and passion to cool, lets go &c. JOHNSON.

⁶ *Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works;]* Conceit for imagination. So, in *The Rape of Lucrece*:

“And the conceited painter was so nice.” MALONE.

See Vol. XXI. p. 126, n. 8. STEEVENS.

Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
 And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
 Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,⁷
 Starts up, and stands on end. O gentle son,
 Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
 Sprinkle cool patience.⁸ Whereon do you look?

HAM. On him! on him!—Look you, how pale
 he glares!

His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
 Would make them capable.⁹—Do not look upon
 me;

Left, with this piteous action, you convert

⁷ ——— *like life in excrements,*] The hairs are excrementitious, that is, without life or sensation; yet those very hairs, as if they had life, start up, &c. POPE.

So, in *Macbeth*:

“The time has been ———

“ ——— my fell of hair,

“Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir,

“As life were in’t.” MALONE.

Not only the hair of animals having neither life nor sensation was called an *excrement*, but the feathers of birds had the same appellation. Thus, in Walton's *Complete Angler*, P. I. c. i. p. 9. edit. 1766: “I will not undertake to mention the several kinds of fowl by which this is done, and his curious palate pleased by day; and which, with their very *excrements*, afford him a soft lodging at night. WHALLEY.

⁸ *Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper*

Sprinkle cool patience.] This metaphor seems to have been suggested by an old black letter novel, (already quoted in a note on *The Merchant of Venice*, A& III. sc. ii.) Green's *History of the fair Bellora*: “Therefore flake the burning *heate* of thy *flaming* affections, with some drops of *cooling* moderation.” STEEVENS.

⁹ *His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,*

Would make them capable.] Capable here signifies intelligent; endued with understanding. So, in *King Richard III*:

“ ——— O, 'tis a parlous boy,

“Bold, quick, ingenions, forward, *capable*.”

We yet use *capacity* in this sense. See also Vol. XVI. p. 177, &c. n. 9. MALONE.

My stern effects:² then what I have to do
Will want true colour; tears, perchance, for blood,

QUEEN. To whom do you speak this?

HAM. Do you see nothing there?

QUEEN. Nothing at all; yet all, that is, I see.

HAM. Nor did you nothing hear?

QUEEN. No, nothing, but ourselves.

HAM. Why, look you there! look, how it steals
away!

My father, in his habit as he liv'd!³

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!
[Exit Ghost.

QUEEN. This is the very coinage of your brain:
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.⁴

HAM. Ecstasy!

² *My stern effects:] Effects for actions; deeds effected.*

MALONE.

³ *My father, in his habit as he liv'd!]* If the poet means by this expression, that his father appeared in his own *familiar habit*, he has either forgot that he had originally introduced him in *armour*, or must have meant to vary his dress at this his last appearance. The difficulty might perhaps be a little obviated by pointing the line thus:

My father—in his habit—as he liv'd! STEEVENS.

A man's armour, who is used to wear it, may be called his *habit*, as well as any other kind of clothing. *As he lived*, probably means—"as if he were alive—as if he lived." M. MASON.

As if is frequently so used in these plays; but this interpretation does not entirely remove the difficulty which has been stated.

MALONE.

⁴ *This is the very coinage of your brain:*

This bodiless creation ecstasy

Is very cunning in,] So, in *The Rape of Lucrece*:

"Such shadows are the weak brain's forgeries." MALONE.

Ecstasy in this place, and many others, means a temporary alienation of mind, a fit. So, in *Eliofo Libidinoso*, a novel, by John Hinde, 1606: "——that bursting out of an *ecstasy* wherein

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful musick: It is not madness,
That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word; which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass, but my madness, speaks:
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place;⁵
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,⁶
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue:
For, in the fatness of these purfy times,
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg;
Yea, curb' and woo, for leave to do him good.

QUEEN. O Hamlet! thou hast cleft my heart in
twain.

HAM. O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night: but go not to my uncle's bed;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat
Of habit's devil, is angel yet in this;⁸

she had long stood, like one beholding Medusa's head, lament-
ing" &c. STEEVENS.

See Vol. XI. p. 146, n. 4. MALONE.

⁵ — skin and film the ulcerous place;] The same indelicate
allusion occurs in *Measure for Measure*:

"That skins the vice o' the top." STEEVENS.

⁶ — do not spread the compost &c.] Do not, by any new indul-
gence, heighten your former offences. JOHNSON.

⁷ — curb —] That is, bent and truckle. Fr. *courber*. So, in
Pierce Plowman:

"Then I courbid on my knees," &c. STEEVENS.

⁸ That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat

Of habit's devil, is angel yet in this;] This passage is left out

That to the use of actions fair and good
 He likewise gives a frock, or livery,
 That aptly is put on: Refrain to-night;
 And that shall lend a kind of easiness
 To the next abstinence: the next more easy:⁹
 For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
 And either curb the devil,² or throw him out
 With wondrous potency. Once more, good night!
 And when you are desirous to be blest'd,
 I'll blessing beg of you.— For this same lord,
 [Pointing to POLONIUS.]

in the two elder folios: it is certainly corrupt, and the players did the discreet part to fiddle what they did not understand. *Habit's devil* certainly arose from some conceited tamperer with the text, who thought it was necessary, in contrast to *angel*. The emendation in my text I owe to the sagacity of Dr. Thirlby:

*That monster custom, who all sense doth eat
 Of habits evil, is angel &c.* THEOBALD.

I think Thirlby's conjecture wrong, though the succeeding editors have followed it; *angel* and *devil* are evidently opposed. JOHNSON.

I incline to think with Dr. Thirlby; though I have left the text undisturbed. From *That monster* to *put on*, is not in the folio. MALONE.

I would read—*Or habit's devil*. The poet first styles *Custom* a *monster*, and may aggravate and amplify his description by adding, that it is the “*dæmon who presides over habit*.”—*That monster custom, or habit's devil, is yet an angel* in this particular. STEEVENS.

⁹ — *The next more easy:*] This passage, as far as *potency*, is omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

² *And either curb the devil, &c.*] In the quarto, where alone this passage is found, some word was accidentally omitted at the press in the line before us. The quarto, 1604, reads:

And either the devil, or throw him out &c.

For the insertion of the word *curb* I am answerable. The printer or corrector of a later quarto, finding the line nonsense, omitted the word *either*, and substituted *master* in its place. The modern editors have accepted the substituted word, and yet retain *either*; by which the metre is destroyed. The word omitted in the first copy was undoubtedly a monosyllable. MALONE.

This very rational conjecture may be countenanced by the same expression in *The Merchant of Venice*:

“*And curb this cruel devil of his will.*” STEEVENS.

I do repent; But heaven hath pleas'd it so,—
 To punish me with this, and this with me,³
 That I must be their scourge and minister.
 I will bestow him, and will answer well
 The death I gave him. So, again, good night!—
 I must be cruel, only to be kind:⁴
 Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.—
 But one word more, good lady.⁵

QUEEN.

What shall I do?

HAM. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
 Let the bloat king⁶ tempt you again to bed;
 Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you, his mouse;⁷

³ *To punish me with this, and this with me,]* To punish me by making me the instrument of this man's death, and to punish this man by my hand. For this, the reading of both the quarto and folio, Sir T. Hanmer and the subsequent editors have substituted,

To punish him with me, and me with him. MALONE.

I take leave to vindicate the last editor of the octavo Shakspeare from any just share in the foregoing accusation. Whoever looks into the edition 1785, will see the line before us printed exactly as in this and Mr. Malone's text.—In several preceding instances a similar censure on the same gentleman has been as undeservedly implied. STEEVENS.

⁴ *I must be cruel, only to be kind:]* This sentiment resembles the—*facto pius, & sceleratus eodem*, of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, B. III. It is thus translated by Golding:

“For which he might both justly kinde, and cruel called bee.”

STEEVENS.

⁵ *But one word more, &c.]* This passage I have restored from the quartos. For the sake of metre, however, I have supplied the conjunction—*But*. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Let the bloat king—]* i. e. the swollen king. *Bloat* is the reading of the quarto, 1604. MALONE.

This again hints at his intemperance. He had already drank himself into a dropsy. BLACKSTONE.

The folio reads—*blunt* king. HENDERSON.

⁷ — *his mouse;]* *Mouse* was once a term of endearment. So, in Warner's *Albion's England*, 1602, Book II. ch. xvi:

“God bless thee mouse, the bridegroom said,” &c.

And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,⁸
 Or padling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
 Make you to ravel all this matter out
 That I essentially am not in madnes,
 But mad in craft.⁹ 'Twere good, you let him know:

Again, in the *Menæchmi*, 1595: "Shall I tell thee, sweet mouse? I never look upon thee, but I am quite out of love with my wife."

Again, in Churchyard's *Spider and Gowl*, 1575:

"She wan the love of all the house,
 "And pranckt it like a pretty mouse."

This term of endearment is very ancient, being found in *A new and merry Enterlude, called the Triall of Treasure*, 1567:

"My mouse, my nobs, my cony sweete;
 "My hope and joye, my whole delight." MALONE.

⁸ — reechy kisses;] *Reechy* is smoky. The author meant to convey a coarse idea, and was not very scrupulous in his choice of an epithet. The same, however, is applied with greater propriety to the neck of a cook-maid in *Coriolanus*. Again, in *Hans Beer Pot's Invisible Comedy*, 1618:

"_____ bade him go
 "And wash his face, he look'd so reechily,
 "Like bacon hanging on the chimney's roof."

STEEVENS.

Reechy properly means *steaming with insudation*, and seems to have been selected, to convey, in this place, its grossest import.

HENLEY.

Reechy includes, I believe, *heat* as well as *smoke*. The verb to *reech*, which was once common, was certainly a corruption of—to *reek*. In a former passage Hamlet has remonstrated with his mother, on her living

"In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed." MALONE.

⁹ *That I essentially am not in madnes,*

But mad in craft.] The reader will be pleased to see Dr. Farmer's extract from the old quarto *Historie of Hamblet*, of which he had a fragment only in his possession.—"It was not without cause, and just occasion, that my gestures, countenances, and words, seeme to proceed from a madman, and that I desire to haue all men esteeme mee wholly deprived offense and reasonable understanding, bycause I am well assured, that he that hath made no conscience to kill his owne brother, (accustomed to murthers, and allured with desire of gouernement without controll in his treasons will not spare to saue himselfe with the like crueltie, in the blood

For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wife,
 Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,²
 Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?
 No, in despite of sense, and secrecy,
 Unpeg the basket on the house's top
 Let the birds fly;³ and, like the famous ape,

and flesh of the loyns of his brother, by him massacred: and therefore it is better for me to sayne madnesse, then to use my right senses as nature hath bestowed them upon me. The bright shining cleannes thereof I am forced to hide vnder this shadow of dissimulation, as the sun doth hir beams under some great cloud, when the wether in summer-time ouercasteth: the face of a madman serueth to couer my gallant countenance, and the gestures of a fool are fit for me, to the end that, guiding myself wisely therin, I may preserue my life for the Danes and the memory of my late deceased father; for that the desire of reuenging his death is so ingraven in my heart, that if I dye not shortly, I hope to take such and so great vengeance, that these countreyes shall for euer speake thereof. Neuerthelesse I must stay the time, meanes, and occasion, lest by making ouer-great hast, I be now the cause of mine own sodaine ruine and ouerthrow, and by that meanes end, before I beginne to effect my hearts desire: hee that hath to doe with a wicked, disloyall, cruell, and discourteous man, must vse craft, and politike inuentions, such as a fine witte can best imagine, not to discouer his interprise; for seeing that by force I cannot effect my desire, reason alloweth me by dissimulation, subtiltie, and secret practises to proceed therein." STEEVENS.

² ——— a gib,] So, in Drayton's *Epistle from Elinor Cobham to Duke Humphrey*:

"And call me beldam, gib, witch, might-mare, trot."

Gib was a common name for a cat. So, in Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose*, ver. 6204:

"——— gibbe our cat,

"That waiteth mice and rats to killen." STEEVENS.

See Vol. XII. p. 190, n. 6. MALONE.

³ Unpeg the basket on the house's top,

Let the birds fly;] Sir John Suckling, in one of his letters, may possibly allude to the same story; "It is the story of the jackanapes and the partridges; thou starest after a beauty till it be lost to thee and then let'st out another, and starest after that till it is gone too."

WARNER.

To try conclusions,⁴ in the basket creep,
And break your own neck down.

QUEEN. Be thou assur'd, if words be made of
breath,

And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

HAM. I must to England;⁵ you know that?

QUEEN. Alack,
I had forgot; 'tis so concluded on.

HAM. There's letters seal'd;⁶ and my two school-
fellows,—

Whom I will trust, as I will adders fang'd,⁷—
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way;⁸
And marshall me to knavery: Let it work;
For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer

⁴ *To try conclusions,*] i. e. experiments. See Vol. VIII. p. 38, n. 2.
STEEVENS.

⁵ *I must to England;*] Shakspeare does not inform us how Hamlet came to know that he was to be sent to England. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were made acquainted with the King's intentions for the first time in the very last scene; and they do not appear to have had any communication with the prince since that time. Add to this, that in a subsequent scene, when the King, after the death of Polonius, informs Hamlet he was to go to England, he expresses great surprize, as if he had not heard any thing of it before.—This last, however, may, perhaps, be accounted for, as contributing to his design of passing for a madman. MALONE.

⁶ *There's letters seal'd: &c.*] The nine following verses are added out of the old edition. POPE.

⁷ — *adders fang'd,*] That is, adders with their fangs or poisonous teeth, undrawn. It has been the practice of mountebanks to boast the efficacy of their antidotes by playing with vipers, but they first disabled their fangs. JOHNSON.

⁸ — *they must sweep my way, &c.*] This phrase occurs again in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“ — some friends, that will

“ Sweep your way for you.” STEEVENS.

Hoist⁹ with his own petar : and it shall go hard,
But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the moon : O, 'tis most sweet,
When in one line two crafts directly meet.²—
This man shall set me packing.
I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room :³—
Mother, good night.—Indeed, this counsellor
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you :⁴—
Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally; HAMLET dragging in POLONIUS.*]

⁹ *Hoist &c.*] *Hoist*, for *hoised*; as *past*, for *passed*. STEEVENS.

² *When in one line two crafts directly meet.*] Still alluding to a *countermine*. MALONE.

The same expression has already occurred in *King John*, A & IV. speech ult:

“ Now powers from home, and discontents at home,
“ *Meet in one line.*” STEEVENS.

³ *I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room:*] A line somewhat similar occurs in *King Henry VI.* Part III:

“ I'll throw thy body in another room,——.”

The word *guts* was not anciently so offensive to delicacy as it is at present; but was used by Lyly (who made the *first* attempt to polish our language) in his serious compositions. So, in his *Mydas*, 1592: “ Could not the treasure of Phrygia, nor the tributes of Greece, nor mountains in the East, whose *guts* are gold, satisfy thy mind?” In short, *guts* was used where we now use *entrails*. Stanyhurst often has it in his translation of Virgil, 1582:

Pectoribus inhians spirantia consulit exta.

“ She weenes her fortune by *guts* hoate smoakye to conster.” STEEVENS.

⁴ *Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you:*] Shakspeare has been unfortunate in his management of the story of this play, the most striking circumstances of which arise so early in its formation, as not to leave him room for a conclusion suitable to the importance of its beginning. After this last interview with the Ghost, the character of Hamlet has lost all its consequence.

STEEVENS.

A C T IV.⁵ S C E N E VI.*The same.**Enter King, Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.*

KING. There's matter in these sighs ; these profound heaves ;

You must translate : 'tis fit we understand them :
Where is your son ?

QUEEN. Bestow this place on us a little while.⁶ —

[*To ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN, who go out.*

Ah, my good lord,⁷ what have I seen to-night ?

KING. What, Gertrude ? How does Hamlet ?

QUEEN. Mad as the sea, and wind, when both contend⁸

Which is the mightier : In his lawless fit,

⁵ *Act IV.*] This play is printed in the old editions without any separation of the acts. The division is modern and arbitrary ; and is here not very happy, for the pause is made at a time when there is more continuity of action than in almost any other of the scenes.

JOHNSON.

⁶ *Bestow this place on us a little while.*] This line is wanting in the folio. STEEVENS.

⁷ — my good lord,] The quartos read—*mine own lord.*

STEEVENS.

⁸ *Mad as the sea, and wind, when both contend &c.*] We have precisely the same image in *King Lear*, expressed with more brevity :

“ — he was met even now,

“ *As mad as the VEX'D sea.*” MALONE.

Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries, *A rat! a rat!*
And, in this brainish apprehension, kills
The unseen good old man.

KING. O heavy deed!
It had been so with us, had we been there;
His liberty is full of threats to all;
To you yourself, to us, to every one.
Alas! how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of
haunt,⁹

This mad young man: but, so much was our love,
We would not understand what was most fit;
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

QUEEN. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore,²

⁹ — out of haunt,] I would rather read,—out of harm.

JOHNSON.

Out of haunt, means out of company. So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“Dido and her Sichæus shall want troops,
“And all the *haunt* be ours.”

Again, in Warner's *Albion's England*, 1602, Book V. ch. xxvi:

“And from the smith of heaven's wife allure the amorous
haunt.”

The place where men assemble, is often poetically called the *haunt of men*. So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

“We talk here in the publick *haunt* of men.” STEEVENS.

² — like some ore,] Shakspeare seems to think *ore* to be *or*, that is, gold. Base metals have *ore* no less than precious.

JOHNSON.

Shakspeare uses the general word *ore* to express *gold*, because it was the most excellent of ores. — I suppose we should read “of *metal* base” instead of *metals*, which much improves the construction of the passage. M. MASON.

Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

KING. O, Gertrude, come away!
'The fun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance and excuse.—Ho! Guildenstern!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:
Go, seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[Exeunt ROS. and GUIL.]

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;
And let them know, both what we mean to do,
And what's untimely done: so, haply, slander,^a—

He has perhaps used *ore* in the same sense in his *Rape of Lucrece*:

“When beauty boasted blushes, in despite

“Virtue would stain that *ore* with silver white.”

A mineral Minshew defines in his Dictionary, 1617, “Any thing that grows in mines, and contains metals.” Shakspeare seems to have used the word in this sense,—for a rude mass of metals. In Bullokar's *English Expositor*, 8vo, 1616, *Mineral* is defined, “mettall, or any thing digged out of the earth.” MALONE.

Minerals are mines. So, in *The Golden Remains of Hales of Eton*, 1693, p. 34: “Controversies of the times, like spirits in the minerals, with all their labour, nothing is done.”

Again, in Hall's *Virgidemiarum*, Lib. VI:

“Shall it not be a wild fig in a wall,

“Or fired brimstone in a minerall?” STEEVENS.

^a — *so, haply, slander, &c.*] Neither these words, nor the following three lines and an half, are in the folio. In the quarto, 1604, and all the subsequent quartos, the passage stands thus:

“—And what's untimely done.

“Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,” &c.

the compositor having omitted the latter part of the first line, as in

Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank,³
Transports his poison'd shot,—may miss our name,
And hit the woundless air.⁴—O, come away!
My soul is full of discord, and dismay. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Another Room in the same.

Enter HAMLET.

HAM.——Safely flow'd, — [Ros. &c. within.
Hamlet! lord Hamlet!] But soft,⁵—what noise?
who calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

a former scene, (see p. 190, n. 2,) a circumstance which gives additional strength to an observation made in Vol. XVIII. p. 408, n. 4. Mr. Theobald supplied the *lacuna* by reading,—*For haply slander, &c.* So appears to me to suit the context better; for these lines are rather in apposition with those immediately preceding, than an illation from them. Mr. M. Mason, I find, has made the same observation.

Shakspeare, as Theobald has observed, again expatiates on the diffusive power of slander, in *Cymbeline*:

“——No, 'tis *slander*;

“Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue

“Out-venoms all the worms of Nile, whose breath

“Rides on the posting winds, and doth bely

“All corners of the world.” MALONE.

Mr. Malone reads—*So viperous slander.* STEEVENS.

³ —— *cannon to his blank,*] The *blank* was the white mark at which shot or arrows were directed. So, in *King Lear*:

“——let me still remain

“The true *blank* of thine eye.” STEEVENS.

⁴ —— *the woundless air.*] So, in a former scene:

“It is as *the air invulnerable.*” MALONE.

⁵ —— *But soft,*] I have added these two words from the quarto, 1604. STEEVENS.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

ROS. What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

HAM. Compounded it with dust,⁶ whereto 'tis kin.

ROS. Tell us where 'tis; that we may take it thence,
And bear it to the chapel.

HAM. Do not believe it.

ROS. Believe what?

HAM. That I can keep your counsel, and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge!—what replication should be made by the son of a king?

ROS. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

HAM. Ay, sir; that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king best service in the end: He keeps

The folio reads:

"Ham. Safely flow'd.

"Ros &c. within. Hamlet! lord Hamlet.

"Ham. What noise," &c.

In the quarto, 1604, the speech stands thus:

"Ham. Safely flow'd; but soft, what noise? who calls on Hamlet?" &c.

I have therefore printed Hamlet's speech unbroken, and inserted that of Rosencrantz, &c. from the folio, before the words, *but soft*, &c. In the modern editions Hamlet is made to take notice of the noise made by the courtiers, before he has heard it. MALONE.

⁶ *Compounded it with dust,*] So, in *King Henry IV.* Part II:

"Only compound me with forgotten dust."

Again, in our poet's 71st Sonnet:

"When I perhaps compounded am with clay."

MALONE.

them, like an ape,⁷ in the corner of his jaw; first mouth'd, to be last swallow'd: When he needs what you have glean'd, it is but squeezing you, and, spunge, you shall be dry again.

Ros. I understand you not, my lord.

⁷ ——— *like an ape,*] The quarto has *apple*, which is generally followed. The folio has *ape*, which Sir T. Hanmer has received, and illustrated with the following note:

“It is the way of monkeys in eating, to throw that part of their food, which they take up first, into a pouch they are provided with on each side of their jaw, and there they keep it, till they have done with the rest.” JOHNSON.

Surely this should be “like an *ape*, an *apple*.” FARMER.

The reading of the folio, *like an ape*, I believe to be the true one, because Shakspeare has the same phraseology in many other places. The word *ape* refers to the king, not to his courtiers. *He keeps them like an ape, in the corner of his jaw, &c.* means, he keeps them, as an ape keeps food, in the corner of his jaw, &c. So, in *King Henry IV. Part I*: “—— your chamber-lie breeds fleas like a loach;” i. e. as fast as a loach breeds loaches. Again, in *King Lear*: “They flatter'd me like a dog;” i. e. as a dog fawns upon and flatters his master.

That the particular food in Shakspeare's contemplation was an *apple*, may be inferred from the following passage in *The Captain*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

“And lie, and kiss my hand unto my mistress,
“As, often as an *ape* does for an *apple*.”

I cannot approve of Dr. Farmer's reading. Had our poet meant to introduce both the *ape* and the *apple*, he would, I think, have written not *like*, but “as an *ape* an *apple*.”

The two instances above quoted shew that any emendation is unnecessary. The reading of the quarto is, however, defensible.

MALONE.

Apple in the quarto is a mere typographical error. So, in Peele's *Araygnement of Paris*, 1584:

“—— you wot it very well
“All that be Dian's maides are vowed to halter *apples* in hell.”

The meaning, however, is clearly “as an *ape* does an *apple*.”

RITSON.

HAM. I am glad of it: A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.⁸

ROS. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

HAM. The body is with the king,⁹ but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing——

GUIL. A thing, my lord?

HAM. Of nothing:² bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.³ [Exeunt.

⁸ —— *A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.*] This, if I mistake not, is a proverbial sentence. MALONE.

Since the appearance of our author's play, these words have become proverbial; but no earlier instance of the idea conveyed by them, has occurred within the compass of my reading. STEEVENS.

⁹ *The body is with the king,*] This answer I do not comprehend. Perhaps it should be,—*The body is not with the king, for the king is not with the body.* JOHNSON.

Perhaps it may mean this,—The body is in the king's house, (i. e. the present king's,) yet the king (i. e. he who should have been king,) is not with the body. Intimating that the usurper is here, the true king in a better place. Or it may mean—the guilt of the murder lies with the king, but the king is not where the body lies. The affected obscurity of Hamlet must excuse so many attempts to procure something like a meaning. STEEVENS.

² *Of nothing:*] Should it not be read—*Or nothing?* When the courtiers remark that Hamlet has contemptuously called the king a thing. Hamlet defends himself by observing, that the king must be a thing, or nothing. JOHNSON.

The text is right. So, in *The Spanish Tragedy*:

“In troth, my lord, it is a thing of nothing.”

And, in one of Harvey's letters “a silly bug-beare, a sorry puffe of winde, a thing of nothing.” FARMER.

So, in Decker's *Match me in London*, 1631:

“At what dost thou laugh?”

“At a thing of nothing, at thee.”

Again, in *Look about you*, 1600:

“A very little thing, a thing of nothing. STEEVENS.

Mr. Steevens has given [i. e. edit. 1778] many parallelisms: but the origin of all is to be look'd for, I believe, in the 144th Psalm, ver. 5: “Man is like a thing of nought.” Mr. Steevens must have

S C E N E III.

Another Room in the same.

Enter King, attended.

KING. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.

How dangerous is it, that this man goes loose?

Yet must not we put the strong law on him:

He's lov'd of the distracted multitude,

Who like not in their judgement, but their eyes;

And, where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,

But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,

This sudden sending him away must seem

Deliberate pause: Diseases, desperate grown,

By desperate appliance are reliev'd,

Enter ROSENKRANTZ.

Or not at all.—How now? what hath befallen?

ROS. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

KING. But where is he?

observed, that the book of Common Prayer, and the translation of the Bible into English, furnished our old writers with many forms of expression, some of which are still in use. WHALLEY.

* — *Hide fox, &c.*] There is a play among children called, *Hide fox, and all after.* HANMER.

The same sport is alluded to in Decker's *Satiromastix*: "— our unhandsome-faced poet does play at bo-peep with your grace, and cries—*All hid, as boys do.*"

This passage is not in the quarto. STEEVENS.

ROS. Without, my lord ; guarded, to know your pleasure.

KING. Bring him before us.

ROS. Ho, Guildenstern ! bring in my lord.

Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.

KING. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius ?

HAM. At supper.

KING. At supper ? Where ?

HAM. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten : a certain convocation of politick worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet : we fat all creatures else, to fat us ; and we fat ourselves for maggots : Your fat king, and your lean beggar, is but variable service ; two dishes, but to one table ; that's the end.

KING. Alas, alas ! ³

HAM. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king ; and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

KING. What dost thou mean by this ?

HAM. Nothing, but to show you how a king may go a progress⁴ through the guts of a beggar.

KING. Where is Polonius ?

HAM. In heaven ; send thither to see : if your messenger find him not there, seek him i'the other place yourself. But, indeed, if you find him not

³ *Alas, alas !*] This speech, and the following, are omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

⁴ *—go a progress—*] Alluding to the royal journeys of state, always styled *progresses* ; a familiar idea to those who, like our author, lived during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I. STEEVENS.

within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

KING. Go seek him there. [*To some Attendants.*

HAM. He will stay till you come.

[*Exeunt Attendants.*

KING. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,—

Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done,—must send thee
hence

With fiery quickness:⁵ Therefore, prepare thyself;
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,⁶
The associates tend, and every thing is bent
For England.

HAM. For England?

KING. Ay, Hamlet.

HAM. Good.

KING. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

HAM. I see a cherub, that sees them.—But, come;
for England!—Farewell, dear mother.

KING. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

HAM. My mother: Father and mother is man
and wife; man and wife is one flesh; and so, my
mother. Come, for England. [*Exit.*

KING. Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed
aboard;

⁵ *With fiery quickness:]* These words are not in the quartos. We meet with *fiery expedition* in *King Richard III.* STEEVENS.

⁶ *—the wind at help,]* I suppose it should be read,
The bark is ready, and the wind at helm. JOHNSON.

—at help,] i. e. at hand, ready,—ready to help or assist you.
RITSON.

Similar phraseology occurs in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*:

“ — I'll leave it

“ *At careful nursing.*” STEEVENS.

Delay it not, I'll have him hence to-night:
 Away; for every thing is seal'd and done
 That else leans on the affair: Pray you, make haste.

[*Exeunt ROS. and GUIL.*

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,
 (As my great power thereof may give thee sense;
 Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
 After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
 Pays homage to us,) thou may'st not coldly set
 Our sovereign process;⁷ which imports at full,
 By letters conjuring⁸ to that effect,

⁷ ——— *thou may'st not coldly set*

Our sovereign process;] I adhere to the reading of the quarto and folio. Mr. M. Mason observes, that "one of the common acceptations of the verb *set*, is to value or estimate; as we say to *set* at nought; and in that sense it is used here." STEEVENS.

Our poet has here, I think, as in many other places, used an elliptical expression: "thou may'st not coldly set *by* our sovereign process;" thou may'st not *set little by* it, or estimate it lightly. "To *set by*," Cole renders in his Dict. 1679, by *æstimo*. "To *set little by*," he interprets *parvi-facio*. See many other instances of similar ellipses, in Vol. XIX. p. 235, n. 5. MALONE.

⁸ *By letters conjuring*—] Thus the folio. The quarto reads,
By letters congruing—. STEEVENS.

The reading of the folio may derive some support from the following passage in *The History of Hamlet*, bl. let. "—— making the king of England minister of his massacring resolution; to whom he purposed to send him, [Hamlet,] and by letters *desire* him to put him to death." So also, by a subsequent line:

"*Ham.* Wilt thou know the effect of what I wrote?

"*Hor.* Ay, good my lord.

"*Ham.* An earnest *conjunction* from the king," &c.

The circumstances mentioned as inducing the king to send the prince to England, rather than elsewhere, are likewise found in *The History of Hamlet*.

Effect was formerly used for *act* or *deed*, simply, and is so used in the line before us. So, in Leo's *Historie of Africa*, translated by Pory, folio, 1600, p. 253: "Three daies after this *effect*, there came to us a Zuum, that is, a captaine," &c. See also *supra*, p. 234, n. 2.

The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;
For like the heſtick in my blood he rages,⁹
And thou muſt cure me: Till I know 'tis done.
Howe'er my haps, my joys will ne'er begin.²

[Exit.

The verb to *conjure* (in the ſenſe of to *ſupplicate*,) was formerly accented on the firſt ſyllable. So, in *Macbeth*:

" I conjure you, by that which you profeſs,
" Howe'er you come to know it, answer me."

Again, in *King John*:

" I conjure thee but ſlowly; run more faſt."

Again, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

" I conjure thee, by Roſaline's bright eyes,"—.

Again, in *Measure for Measure*:

" O prince, I conjure thee, as thou believ'ſt," &c.

MALONE.

⁹ — like the heſtick in my blood he rages,] So, in *Love's Labour's Loſt*:

" I would forget her, but a fever, ſhe,
" Reigns in my blood." MALONE.

² Howe'er my haps, my joys will ne'er begin.] This being the termination of a ſcene, ſhould, according to our author's cuſtom, be rhymed. Perhaps he wrote,

Howe'er my hopes, my joys are not begun.

If *haps* be retained, the meaning will be, 'till I know 'tis done, I ſhall be miſerable, whatever befall me. JOHNSON.

The folio reads, in ſupport of Dr. Johnson's remark,—

Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.

Mr. Heath would read:

Howe'er 't may hap, my joys will ne'er begin. STEEVENS.

By his *haps*, he means his ſucceſſes. His fortune was begun, but his joys were not. M. MASON.

Howe'er my haps, my joys will ne'er begin.] This is the reading of the quarto. The folio, for the ſake of rhyme, reads:

Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.

But this, I think, the poet could not have written. The king is ſpeaking of the future time. To ſay, till I ſhall be informed that a certain act has been done, whatever may befall me, my joys never had a beginning, is ſurely nonſenſe. MALONE.

S C E N E IV.

*A Plain in Denmark.**Enter FORTINBRAS, and Forces, marching.*

FOR. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;

Tell him, that, by his licence, Fortinbras
Craves³ the conveyance of a promis'd march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
If that his majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye,⁴
And let him know so.

CAP. I will do't, my lord.

FOR. Go softly on.

[*Exeunt FORTINBRAS and Forces.*]

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, &c.

HAM. Good sir, whose powers are these?⁵

³ *Craves* —] Thus the quartos. The folio—*Claims*. STEEVENS.

⁴ *We shall express our duty in his eye,*] So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“ ——— tended her i' the eyes.”

In his eye means in his presence. The phrase appears to have been formulary. See *The Establishment of the Household of Prince Henry*, A. D. 1610: “Also the gentleman-usher shall be careful to see and informe all such as doe service in the Prince's eye, that they performe their duties” &c. Again, in *The Regulations for the Government of the Queen's Household*, 1627: “ ——— all such as doe service in the Queen's eye.” STEEVENS.

⁵ *Good sir, &c.*] The remaining part of this scene is omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.



R. Westall pinx.

M. F. Geisler sculps.

SHAKSPEARE.

Hamlet.

ACT. IV. SCEN. VII.

Ophelia.

CAP. They are of Norway, fir.

HAM. How purpos'd, fir,
I pray you?

CAP. Against some part of Poland.

HAM. Who
Commands them, fir?

CAP. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

HAM. Goes it against the main of Poland, fir,
Or for some frontier?

CAP. Truly to speak, fir, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground,
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
Nor will it yield to Norway, or the Pole,
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

HAM. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

CAP. Yes, 'tis already garrison'd.

HAM. Two thousand souls, and twenty thousand
ducats,

Will not debate the question of this straw :

This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace;
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies.—I humbly thank you, fir.

CAP. God be wi'you, fir. [Exit Captain.

ROS. Will't please you go, my lord?

HAM. I will be with you straight. Go a little
before. [Exeunt ROS. and GUILD.

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good, and market of his time,⁶

⁶ ——— chief good, and market of his time, &c.] If his highest good,
and that for which he sells his time, be to sleep and feed. JOHNSON.

Market, I think, here means profit. MALONE.

Be but to sleep, and feed? a beast, no more.
 Sure, he, that made us with such large discourse,⁷
 Looking before, and after, gave us not
 That capability and godlike reason
 To fast in us unus'd. Now, whether it be
 Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple⁸
 Of thinking too precisely on the event,—
 A thought, which, quarter'd, hath but one part
 wisdom,

And, ever, three parts coward,—I do not know
 Why yet I live to say, *This thing's to do*;
 Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,
 To do't. Examples, gross as earth, exhort me:
 Witness, this army, of such mass, and charge,
 Led by a delicate and tender prince;
 Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
 Makes mouths at the invisible event;
 Exposing what is mortal, and unsure,
 To all that fortune, death, and danger, dare,
 Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great,
 Is, not to stir without great argument;⁹

⁷ — *large discourse*,] Such latitude of comprehension, such power of reviewing the past, and anticipating the future. JOHNSON.

⁸ — *some craven scruple* —] Some cowardly scruple. See Vol. IX. p. 274, n. 4. MALONE.

So, in *King Henry VI.* Part I:

“ Or durst not, for his *craven* heart, say this.” STEEVENS.

⁹ — *Rightly to be great*,

Is, not to stir without &c.] This passage I have printed according to the copy. Mr. Theobald had regulated it thus:

— *Tis not to be great*,

Never to stir without great argument;

But greatly &c.

The sentiment of Shakspeare is partly just, and partly romantick.

— *Rightly to be great*,

Is, not to stir without great argument;

is exactly philosophical.

But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,

When honour's at the stake,

But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
 When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
 That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
 Excitements of my reason, and my blood,²
 And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
 The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
 That, for a fantasy, and trick of fame,
 Go to their graves like beds; fight for a plot³
 Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
 Which is not tomb enough, and continent,⁴
 To hide the slain?—O, from this time forth,
 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

[Exit.

is the idea of a modern hero. But then, says he, honour is an argument, or subject of debate, sufficiently great, and when honour is at stake, we must find cause of quarrel in a straw. JOHNSON.

² Excitements of my reason, and my blood,] Provocations which excite both my reason and my passions to vengeance. JOHNSON.

³ — a plot.] A piece, or portion. See Vol. XVII. p. 347, n. 5: REED.

So, in *The Mirror for Magistrates*:

“Of ground to win a plot, a while to dwell,
 “We venture lives, and send our souls to hell.”

HENDERSON:

⁴ — continent,] Continent, in our author, means that which comprehends or encloses. So, in *King Lear*:

“Rive your concealing continents.”

See Vol. XX. p. 408, n. 7. STEEVENS.

Again, Lord Bacon *On the Advancement of Learning*, 4to. 1633; p. 7: — if there be no fulnesse, then is the continent greater then the content.” REED.

S C E N E V.

Elfinore. *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter Queen and HORATIO.

QUEEN. ——— I will not speak with her.

HOR. She is importunate; indeed, distract;
Her mood will needs be pitied.

QUEEN. What would she have?

HOR. She speaks much of her father; says, she
hears,

There's tricks i'the world; and hems, and beats
her heart;

Spurns enviously at straws;⁵ speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move

The hearers to collection;⁶ they aim at it,⁷

And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;

⁵ *Spurns enviously at straws;*] *Envy* is much oftener put by our poet (and those of his time) for direct *aversion*, than for *malignity conceived at the sight of another's excellence or happiness*.

So, in *King Henry VIII*:

"You turn the good we offer into *envy*."

Again, in *God's Revenge against Murder*, 1621, *Hist.* VI. —
"She loves the memory of Syontus, and *envies* and detests that of her two husbands." STEEVENS.

See Vol. XIV. p. 116, n. 3; and Vol. XVI. p. 61, n. 9. MALONE.

⁶ ——— *to collection;*] i. e. to deduce consequences from such premises; or, as Mr. M. Mason observes, "*endeavour to collect some meaning from them*." So, in *Cymbeline*, scene the last:

"—— whose containing

"Is so from sense to hardness, that I can

"Make no *collection* of it."

See the note on this passage, Vol. XIX. p. 234. STEEVENS.

⁷ ——— *they aim at it,*] The quartos read—*they yawn at it*. *To aim* is to guess. So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

"I *aim'd* so near, when I suppos'd you lov'd." STEEVENS.

Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures yield
them,

Indeed would make one think, there might be
thought,

Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.⁸

QUEEN. 'Twere good, she were spoken with;⁹
for she may firew

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds:

Let her come in. [Exit HORATIO.

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,

Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:²

⁸ *Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily,*] i. e. though her meaning cannot be certainly collected, yet there is enough to put a mischievous interpretation to it. WARBURTON.

That *unhappy* once signified *mischievous*, may be known from P. Holland's translation of *Pliny's Natural History*, Book XIX. ch. vii.: "—— the shrewd and *unhappy* fowles which lie upon the lands, and eat up the seed new sowne." We still use *unlucky* in the same sense. STEEVENS.

See Vol. VI. p. 266, n. 9; and Vol. IX. p. 164, n. 5; and Vol. XVI. p. 55, n. 6. MALONE.

⁹ *'Twere good, she were spoken with;*] These lines are given to the Queen in the folio, and to Horatio in the quarto. JOHNSON.

I think the two first lines of Horatio's speech [*'Twere good, &c.*] belong to him; the rest to the Queen. BLACKSTONE.

In the quarto, the Queen, Horatio, and a Gentleman, enter at the beginning of this scene. The two speeches, "She is importunate," &c. and "She speaks much of her father," &c. are there given to the Gentleman, and the line now before us, as well as the two following, to Horatio: the remainder of this speech to the Queen. I think it probable that the regulation proposed by Sir W. Blackstone was that intended by Shakspeare. MALONE.

² —— *to some great amiss:*] Shakspeare is not singular in his use of this word as a substantive. So, in *The Arraignment of Paris*, 1584:

"Gracious forbearer's of this world's amiss."

Again, in Lyly's *Woman in the Moon*, 1597:

"Pale be my looks, to witness my amiss."

Again, in Greene's *Disputation between a He Coneycatcher, &c.* 1592: "—— revive in them the memory of my great amiss."

STEEVENS:

Each toy is, each trifle. MALONE.

So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself, in fearing to be spilt.

Re-enter HORATIO, *with* OPHELIA.

OPH. Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

QUEEN. How now, Ophelia?

OPH. *How should I your true love know^a
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.³*

[Singing.]

QUEEN. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

^a *How should I your true love &c.*] There is no part of this play in its representation on the stage, more pathetick than this scene; which, I suppose, proceeds from the utter insensibility Ophelia has to her own misfortunes.

A great sensibility, or none at all, seems to produce the same effect. In the latter the audience supply what she wants, and with the former they sympathize. Sir J. REYNOLDS.

³ *By his cockle hat and staff,*

And his sandal shoon.] This is the description of a pilgrim. While this kind of devotion was in favour, love-intrigues were carried on under that mask. Hence the old ballads and novels made pilgrimages the subjects of their plots. The cockle-shell hat was one of the essential badges of this vocation: for the chief places of devotion being beyond sea, or on the coasts, the pilgrims were accustomed to put cockle-shells upon their hats, to denote the intention or performance of their devotion. WARBURTON.

So, in Greene's *Never too late*, 1616:

"A hat of straw like to a swain,
"Shelter for the sun and rain,
"With a scallop-shell before," &c.

Again, in *The Old Wives Tale*, by George Peele, 1595: "I will give thee a palmer's staff of yvorie, and a scallop-shell of beaten gold." STEEVENS.

OPH. Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

He is dead and gone, lady,

[Sings.]

He is dead and gone;

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone.

O, ho!

QUEEN. Nay, but Ophelia,——

OPH.

Pray you, mark.

White his shroud as the mountain snow,

[Sings.]

Enter King.

QUEEN. Alas, look here, my lord.

OPH. *Larded all with sweet flowers;*⁴

*Which bewept to the grave did go,*⁵

With true-love showers.

KING. How do you, pretty lady?

OPH. Well, God'ield you!⁶ They say, the owl was a baker's daughter.⁷ Lord, we know what we

⁴ *Larded all with sweet flowers;*] The expression is taken from cookery. JOHNSON.

⁵ —— *did go,*] The old editions read—*did not go*. Corrected by Mr. Pope. STEEVENS.

⁶ *Well, God'ield you!*] i. e. Heaven reward you! So, in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

“Tend me to-night two hours, I ask no more,

“And the Gods yield you for't!”

⁷ So Sir John Grey, in a letter in Ashmole's Appendix to his Account of the Garter, Numb. 46: “The king of his gracious lordshipe, *God yeld* him, have chosen me to be owne of his brethrene of the knyghts of the garter.” THEOBALD.

See Vol. XI. p. 65, &c. n. 6 STEEVENS.

⁷ —— *the owl was a baker's daughter.*] This was a metamorphosis of the common people, arising from the mealy appearance of the owl's feathers, and her guarding the bread from mice.

WARBURTON.

To guard the bread from mice, is rather the office of a cat than

are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table !

KING. Conceit upon her father.

OPH. Pray, let us have no words of this ; but when they ask you, what it means, say you this :

*Good morrow, 'tis Saint Valentine's day,^s
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine :*

an owl. In barns and granaries, indeed, the services of the owl are still acknowledged. This was, however, no *metamorphosis* of the common people, but a legendary story, which both Dr. Johnson and myself have read, yet in what book at least I cannot recollect. —Our Saviour being refused bread by the daughter of a baker, is described as punishing her by turning her into an owl.

STEEVENS.

This is a common story among the vulgar in Gloucestershire, and is thus related: "Our Saviour went into a baker's shop where they were baking, and asked for some bread to eat. The mistress of the shop immediately put a piece of dough into the oven to bake for him; but was reprimanded by her daughter, who insisting that the piece of dough was too large, reduced it to a very small size. The dough, however, immediately afterwards began to swell, and presently became of a most enormous size. Whereupon, the baker's daughter cried out "Heugh, heugh, heugh," which owl-like noise probably induced our Saviour for her wickedness to transform her into that bird." This story is often related to children, in order to deter them from such illiberal behaviour to poor people.

DOUCE.

^s Good morrow, 'tis Saint Valentine's day.] Old copies:
To-morrow is &c.

The correction is Dr. Farmer's. STEEVENS.

There is a rural tradition that about this time of year birds choose their mates. Bourne in his *Antiquities of the Common People*, observes, that, "it is a ceremony never omitted among the vulgar, to draw lots, which they term *Valentines*, on the eve before Valentine day. The names of a select number of one sex are by an equal number of the other put into some vessel; and after that every one draws a name, which for the present is called their *Valentine*, and is also look'd upon as a good omen of their being man and

*Then up he rose, and don'd his clothes,⁹
And dupp'd the chamber door;²
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.*

KING. Pretty Ophelia!

OPH. Indeed, without an oath, I'll make an end
on't:

*By Gis,³ and by Saint Charity,⁴
Alack, and fye for shame!
Young men will do't, if they come to't;
By cock,⁵ they are to blame.*

wife afterwards." Mr. Brand adds, that he has "searched the legend of St. Valentine, but thinks there is no occurrence in his life, that could give rise to this ceremony." MALONE.

⁹ — don'd his clothes,] To don, is to do on, to put on, as doff is to do off, put off. STEEVENS.

² And dupp'd the chamber door;] To dup, is to do up; to lift the latch. It were easy to write,—And op'd—. JOHNSON.

To dup, was a common contraction of to do up. So, in *Damon and Pythias*, 1582: "— the porters are drunk; will they not dup the gate to-day?"

Lord Surrey, in his translation of the second *Æneid*, renders *Panduntur portæ*, &c.

"The gates cast up, we issued out to play."

The phrase seems to have been adopted either from doing up the latch, or drawing up the *partcullis*. Again, in *The Cooke's Play*, in the Chester collection of mysteries, MS. Harl. 1013, p. 140:

"Open up hell-gates anon."

It appears from *Martin Mark-all's Apologie to the Bel-man of London*, 1610, that in the cant of gypsies, &c. Dup the gigger, signified to open the doore. STEEVENS.

³ By Gis,] I rather imagine it should be read,
By Gis——

That is, by St. Cecily. JOHNSON.

See the second paragraph of the next note. STEEVENS.

⁴ — by Saint Charity,] Saint Charity is a known saint among the Roman Catholicks. Spenser mentions her, *Eclog. V.* 255:

"Ah dear lord, and sweet Saint Charity!"

*Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
You promis'd me to wed:*

[He answers.⁶]

*So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.*

KING. How long hath she been thus?

OPH. I hope, all will be well. We must be patient: but cannot choose but weep, to think, they should lay him i'the cold ground: My brother shall

Again, in *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington*, 1601:

"Therefore, sweet master, for *Saint Charity*."

I find, by *Gisse*, used as an adjuration, both by Gascoigne in his *Poems*, by Preston in his *Cambyses*, and in the comedy of *See me, and see me not*, 1618:

"By *Gisse* I swear, were I so fairly wed," &c.

Again, in *King Edward III.* 1599:

"By *Gis*, fair lords, ere many daies be past," &c.

Again, in Heywood's 23d Epigram, Fourth Hundred:

"Nay, by *Gis*, he looketh on you maister, quoth he."

STEEVENS.

In the scene between the Bastard Faulconbridge and the friars and nunne in the First part of *The troublesome Raigne of King John*, (edit. 1779, p. 256, &c.) the nunne swears by *Gis*, and the friars pray to *Saint Withold* (another obsolete saint mentioned in *King Lear*. See Vol. XX. p. 426,) and adjure him by *Saint Charitie* to hear them." BLACKSTONE.

By *Gis*,] There is not the least mention of any saint whose name corresponds with this, either in the *Roman Calendar*, the service in *Usum Sarum*, or in the *Benedictionary* of Bishop Athelwold. I believe the word to be only a corrupted abbreviation of *Jesus*, the letters J. H. S. being anciently all that was set down to denote that sacred name, on altars, the covers of books, &c.

RIDLEY.

Though *Gis* may be, and I believe is, only a contraction of *Jesus*, there is certainly a *Saint Gisen*, with whose name it corresponds. RITSON.

⁶ By cock,] This is likewise a corruption of the sacred name. Many instances of it are given in a note at the beginning of the fifth act of the Second Part of *King Henry IV.* STEEVENS.

⁶ He answers.] These words I have added from the quartos.

STEEVENS.

know of it, and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies;⁷ good night, sweet ladies: good night, good night.

[*Exit.*

KING. Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you. [*Exit* HORATIO.

O! this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death: And now behold,
O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come,⁸ they come not single spies,
But in battalions! First, her father slain;
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove: The people muddied,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts, and
whispers,
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but
greenly,⁹
In hugger-mugger to inter him:² Poor Ophelia

⁷ Come, my coach! *Good night, ladies; &c.*] In Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, 1590, Zabina in her frenzy uses the same expression: "Hell, make ready my coach, my chair, my jewels. I come, I come." MALONE.

⁸ *When sorrows come, &c.*] In Ray's *Proverbs* we find, "Misfortunes seldom come alone," as a proverbial phrase. REED.

⁹ — but greenly,] But *unskillfully*; with *greenness*; that is, without maturity of judgement. JOHNSON.

² *In hugger-mugger to inter him;*] All the modern editions that I have consulted, give it,

In private to inter him; —.

That the words now replaced are better, I do not undertake to prove; it is sufficient that they are Shakspeare's: if phraseology is to be changed as words grow uncouth by disuse, or gross by vulgarity, the history of every language will be lost; we shall no longer have the words of any author; and, as these alterations will be often unskillfully made, we shall in time have very little of his meaning. JOHNSON.

On this just observation I ground the restoration of a gross and unpleasing word in a preceding passage, for which Mr. Pope substituted *groan*. See p. 161, n. 7. The alteration in the present instance was made by the same editor. MALONE.

Divided from herself, and her fair judgement;
 Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts,
 Last, and as much containing as all these,
 Her brother is in secret come from France:
 Feeds on his wonder,^a keeps himself in clouds,
 And wants no buzzers to infect his ear
 With pestilent speeches of his father's death;
 Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,³
 Will nothing stick our person to arraign
 In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
 Like to a murdering-piece,⁴ in many places

This expression is used in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, 1609:

" — he died like a politician,

" In hugger-mugger."

Again, in Harrington's *Ariosto*:

" So that it might be done in hugger-mugger."

Shakspeare probably took the expression from the following passage in Sir Thomas North's translation of *Plutarch*: — "Antonius thinking that his body should be honourably buried, and not in hugger-mugger."

It appears from Greene's *Groundwork of Cony-catching*, 1592, that to hugger was to lurk about. STEEVENS.

The meaning of the expression is ascertained by Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: "*Dinascoso*, Secretly, hiddeonly, in hugger-mugger."

MALONE.

^a Feeds on his wonder,] The folio,

Keeps on his wonder, —.

The quarto,

Feeds on this wonder, —.

Thus the true reading is picked out from between them. Sir T. Hanmer reads unnecessarily,

Feeds on his anger, —. JOHNSON.

³ Wherein necessity, &c.] Sir T. Hanmer reads,

Whence animosity, of latter beggar'd.

He seems not to have understood the connection. *Wherein*, that is, in which pestilent speeches, necessity, or, the obligation of an accuser to support his charge, will nothing stick, &c. JOHNSON.

⁴ Like to a murdering piece,] Such a piece as assassins use, with many barrels. It is necessary to apprehend this, to see the justness of the similitude. WARBURTON.

The same term occurs in a passage in *The Double Marriage* of Beaumont and Fletcher:

Gives me superfluous death! [A noise within.
 QUEEN. Alack! what noise is this?⁵

Enter a Gentleman.

KING. Attend.
 Where are my Switzers?⁶ Let them guard the door:

"And, like a murdering piece, aims not at one,
 "But all that stand within the dangerous level."
 Again, in *All's Lost by Lust*, a tragedy by Rowley, 1633:
 "If thou fail'st too, the king comes with a murdering piece,
 "In the rear."

Again, in *A Fair Quarrel*, by Middleton and Rowley, 1622:
 "There is not such another murdering piece
 "In all the flock of calumny."

It appears from a passage in Smith's *See Grammar*, 1627, that it was a piece of ordnance used in ships of war: "A case-shot is any kinde of small bullets, nailes, old iron, or the like, to put into the case, to shoot out of the ordnances or murderers; these will doe much mischief," &c. STEEVENS.

A *murdering piece* was the specifick term in Shakspeare's time, for a piece of ordnance, or small cannon. The word is found in Cole's Latin Dictionary, 1679, and rendered, "*tormentum murale*."

The small cannon, which are, or were used in the forecastle, half-deck, or steerage of a ship of war, were within this century, called *murdering-pieces*. MALONE.

Perhaps what is now, from the manner of it, called a *swivel*: It is mentioned in Sir T. Roes *Voiage to the E. Indies*, at the end of Della Valle's *Travels*, 1665: "—— the East-India company had a very little pinnace...mann'd she was with ten men, and had only one small *murdering-piece* within her." Probably it was never charged with a single ball, but always with shot, pieces of old iron," &c. RITSON.

⁵ *Alack!* &c.] This speech of the Queen is omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

⁶ —— my Switzers?] I have observed in many of our old plays, that the guards attendant on Kings are called *Switzers*, and that without any regard to the country where the scene lies. Thus, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Noble Gentleman*, A& III. sc. i:

"—— was it not
 "Some place of gain, as clerk to the great band
 "Of marrow-bones, that the people call the *Switzers*?
 "Men made of beef and farennet!" REED.

What is the matter?

GENT. Save yourself, my lord;
The ocean, overpeering of his list,⁷
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste,
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears your officers! The rabble call him, lord;
And, as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,⁸

The reason is, because the Swiss in the time of our poet, as at present, were hired to fight the battles of other nations. So, in Nashe's *Christ's Teares over Jerusalem*, 4to. 1594: "Law, logicke, and the Switzers, may be hired to fight for any body." MALONE.

⁷ *The ocean, over-peering of his list,*] The lists are the barriers which the spectators of a tournament must not pass. JOHNSON.

See note on *Othello*, A& IV. sc. i. STEEVENS.

List, in this place, only signifies *boundary*, i. e. the shore. So, in *King Henry IV.* Part II:

"The very list, the very utmost bound

"Of all our fortunes."

The *selvage* of cloth was in both places, I believe, in our author's thoughts. MALONE.

⁸ *The ratifiers and props of every word,*] By *word* is here meant a declaration, or proposal. It is determined to this sense, by the inference it hath to what had just preceded:

"The rabble call him lord," &c.

This acclamation, which is the *word* here spoken of, was made without regard to antiquity, or received custom, whose concurrence, however, is necessarily required to confer validity and stability in every proposal of this kind. HEATH.

Sir T. Hanmer would transpose this line and the next. Dr. Warburton proposes to read, *ward*; and Dr. Johnson, *weal*, instead of *word*. I should be rather for reading, *work*. TYRWHITT.

In the first folio there is only a comma at the end of the above line; and will not the passage bear this construction? — The rabble call him lord, and as if the world were now but to begin, and as if the ancient custom of hereditary succession were unknown, they, the ratifiers and props of every word he utters, cry, — Let us make choice, that Laertes shall be king. TOLLET.

This construction might certainly be admitted, and the *ratifiers and props of every word* might be understood to be applied to the rabble

They cry, *Choose we; Laertes shall be king!*
Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds,
Laertes shall be king! Laertes king!

QUEEN. How cheerfully on the false trail they
cry!

O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs.⁹

KING. The doors are broke. [Noise within.]

Enter LAERTES, arm'd; Danes following.

LAER. Where is this king? — Sirs, stand you all
without.

DAN. No, let's come in.

LAER. I pray you, give me leave.

DAN. We will, we will.

[*They retire without the door.*]

LAER. I thank you: — keep the door. — O thou
vile king,

Give me my father.

QUEEN. Calmly, good Laertes.

LAER. That drop of blood, that's calm, pro-
claims me bastard;

Cries, cuckold, to my father; brands the harlot

mentioned in a preceding line, without Sir T. Hanmer's transposition of this and the following line; but there is no authority for what Mr. Tollet adds, "of every word *he* [Laertes] *utters*," for the poet has not described Laertes as having uttered a word. If therefore the rabble are called *the ratifiers and props of every word*, we must understand, "of every word *uttered by themselves*:" which is so tame, that it would be unjust to our poet to suppose that to have been his meaning. *Ratifiers, &c.* refer not to the people, but to *custom and antiquity*, which the speaker says are the true ratifiers and props of every word. The last word however of the line may well be suspected to be corrupt; and Mr. Tyrwhitt has probably suggested the true reading. MALONE.

⁹ O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs.] Hounds run counter when they trace the trail backwards. JOHNSON.

Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brow;²
Of my true mother.

KING. What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like? —
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person;
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will. — Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incens'd; — Let him go, Ger-
trude; —

Speak, man.

LAER. Where is my father?

KING.

Dead.

QUEEN.

But not by him.

KING. Let him demand his fill.

LAER. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled
with:

To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience, and grace, to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation: To this point I stand, —
That both the worlds I give to negligence,³
Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd
Most thoroughly for my father.

KING.

Who shall stay you?

LAER. My will, not all the world's:

² — unsmirched brow,] i. e. clean, not defiled. To besmirch, our author uses, A& I. sc. v. and again in *K. Henry V.* A& IV. sc. iii.

This seems to be an allusion to a proverb often introduced in the old comedies. Thus, in *The London Prodigal*, 1605: “— as true as the skin between any man's brows.”

The same phrase is also found in *Much Ado about Nothing*, A& III. sc. v. STEEVENS.

³ That both the worlds I give to negligence,] So, in *Macbeth*:

“ But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer.”

STEEVENS.

And, for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.

KING. Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your re-
venge,
That, sweepstake, you will draw both friend and
foe,
Winner and loser?

LAER. None but his enemies.

KING. Will you know them then?

LAER. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope
my arms;
And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,⁴
Repast them with my blood.

KING. Why, now you speak
Like a good child, and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly⁵ in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgement 'pear,⁶

⁴ — *life-rend'ring pelican,*] So, in the ancient *Interlude of Nature*, bl. 1. no date:

"Who taught the cok hys watche-howres to observe,
"And syng of corage wyth shrill throte on hye?
"Who taught the *pellycan* her tender hart to carve?—
"For she nolde suffer her byrdys to dye?"

It is almost needless to add that this account of the bird is entirely fabulous. STEEVENS.

⁵ — *most sensibly* —] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio, following the error of a later quarto, reads — *most sensible*.

MALONE.

⁶ — *to your judgement 'pear,*] So, the quarto. The folio, and all the later editions, read:

— *to your judgement pierce,*
less intelligibly. JOHNSON.

This elision of the verb to *appear*, is common to Beaumont and Fletcher. So, in *The Maid in the Mill*:

"They 'pear so handsomely, I will go forward."

As day does to our eye.

DANES. [*Within.*] Let her come in.

LAER. How now! what noise is that?

Enter OPHELIA, fantastically dress'd with straws and flowers.

O heat, dry up my brains! tears, seven times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye! —
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love: and, where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.'

Again,

" And where they 'pear so excellent in little,
" They will but flame in great." STEEVENS.

' *Nature is fine in love: and, where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself*

After the thing it loves.] These lines are not in the quarto, and might have been omitted in the folio without great loss, for they are obscure and affected; but, I think, they require no emendation. *Love* (says Laertes) is the passion by which *nature* is most exalted and *refined*; and as substances, *refined* and subtilised, easily obey any impulse, or follow any attraction, some part of nature, so purified and *refined*, flies off after the attracting object, after the thing it loves:

" As into air the purer spirits flow,
" And separate from their kindred dregs below,
" So flew her soul." JOHNSON.

The meaning of the passage may be — That her wits, like the spirit of fine essences, flew off or evaporated. *Fine*, however, sometimes signifies *artful*. So, in *All's well that ends well*: "Thou art too *fine* in thy evidence." STEEVENS.

OPH. *They bore him barefac'd on the bier; ⁸
Hey no nonny, nonny hey nonny: ⁹
And in his grave rain'd many a tear;—*

Fare you well, my dove!

LAER. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade
revenge,
It could not move thus.

OPH. You must sing, *Down a-down, ² an you call
him a-down-a.* O, how the wheel becomes it! ³ It

⁸ *They bore him bare-fac'd on the bier; &c.]* So, in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, Mr. Tyrwhitt's edit. ver. 2879:

“He laid him bare the visage on the bere,
“Therwith he wept that pitee was to here.”

STEEVENS.

⁹ *Hey no nonny, &c.]* These words, which were the burthen of a song, are found only in the folio. See Vol. XX. p. 423, n. 9.
MALONE.

² —— *sing, Down a-down,]* Perhaps Shakspeare alludes to *Phæbe's Sonnet*, by Tho. Lodge, which the reader may find in *England's Helicon*, 1600:

“*Downe a-downe,*
“*Thus Phillis sung,*
“*By fancie once distressed: &c.*

“*And so sing I, with downe a-downe,*” &c.
Down a-down is likewise the burthen of a song in *The Three Ladies of London*, 1584, and perhaps common to many others.

STEEVENS.

See Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: “*Filibustacchina*, The burden of a countrie song; as we say, *Hay doune a doune, douna.*”
MALONE.

³ *O, how the wheel becomes it! &c.]* The story alluded to I do not know; but perhaps the lady stolen by the steward was reduced to *spin*. JOHNSON.

The *wheel* may mean no more than *the burthen of the song*, which she had just repeated, and as such was formerly used. I met with the following observation in an old quarto black-letter book, published before the time of Shakspeare:

“The song was accounted a good one, thogh it was not moche graced by the *wheele*, which in no wise accorded with the subject matter thereof.”

is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.
 LAER. This nothing's more than matter.

I quote this from memory, and from a book, of which I cannot recollect the exact title or date; but the passage was in a preface to some songs or sonnets. I well remember, to have met with the word in the same sense in other old books.

Rota, indeed, as I am informed, is the ancient musical term in Latin, for the burden of a song. Dr. Farmer, however, has just favoured me with a quotation from Nicholas Breton's *Toyes of an idle Head*, 1577, which at once explains the word *wheel* in the sense for which I have contended:

“ That I may sing, full merrily,

“ Not heigh ho *wele*, but care away!”

i. e. not with a melancholy, but a cheerful burthen.

I formerly supposed that the ballad, alluded to by Ophelia, was that entered on the books of the Stationers' Company; “ Otober 1580. Four ballades of the Lord of Lorn and the *False Steward*,” &c. but Mr. Ritson assures me there is no corresponding *theft* in it.

STEEVENS.

I am inclined to think that *wheel* is here used in its ordinary sense, and that these words allude to the occupation of the girl who is supposed to sing the song alluded to by Ophelia.—The following lines in Hall's *Virgidemiarum*, 1597, appear to me to add some support to this interpretation:

“ Some drunken rimer thiaks his time well spent,

“ If he can live to see his name in print;

“ Who when he is once fleshed to the presse,

“ And sees his handselle have such fair successe,

“ Sung to the *wheele*, and sung unto the payle,

“ He sends forth thraves of *ballads* to the sale.”

So, in Sir Thomas Overbury's *Characters*, 1614: “ She makes her hands hard with labour, and her head soft with pittie; and when winter evenings fall early, sitting at her merry *wheele*, she sings a defiance to the giddy *wheele* of fortune.”

Our author likewise furnishes an authority to the same purpose. *Twelfth Night*, Act II. sc. iv:

“ — Come, the *song* we had last night:

“ The *spinsters*, and the knitters in the sun,

“ Do use to *chaunt* it.”

A musical antiquary may perhaps contend, that the controverted words of the text allude to an ancient instrument mentioned by Chaucer, and called by him a *rote*, by others a *vielle*; which was played upon by the friction of a *wheel*. MALONE.

OPH. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance;
pray you, love, remember: and there is pansies,
that's for thoughts.⁴

⁴ *There's rosemary, that's for remembrance;—and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.*] There is probably some mythology in the choice of these herbs, but I cannot explain it. *Pansies* is for thoughts, because of its name, *Pensées*; but why *rosemary* indicates remembrance, except that it is an ever green, and carried at funerals, I have not discovered. JOHNSON.

So, in *All Fools*, a comedy, by Chapman, 1605:

“ What flowers are these ?

“ The *pansie* this.

“ O, That's for lovers' thoughts !”

Rosemary was anciently supposed to strengthen the memory, and was not only carried at funerals, but worn at weddings, as appears from a passage in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Elder Brother*, A⁴ III. sc. iii.

And from another in *Ram-Alley, or Merry-Tricks*, 1611:

“ ——— will I be wed this morning,

“ Thou shalt not be there, nor once be graced with

“ A piece of *rosemary*.”

Again, in *The Noble Spanish Soldier*, 1634: “ I meet few but are stuck with *rosemary*: every one asked me who was to be married.”

Again, in Greene's *Never too late*, 1616: “ ——— she hath given thee a nosegay of flowers, wherein, as a top-gallant for all the rest, is set in *Rosemary* for remembrance.”

Again, in *A Dialogue between Nature and the Phoenix*, by R. Chester, 1601:

“ There's *rosenarie*; the Arabians justify

“ (Physitions of exceeding perfect skill)

“ It comforteth the braine and memorie,” &c. STEEVENS.

Rosemary being supposed to strengthen the memory, was the emblem of fidelity in lovers. So, in *A Handfull of Pleasant Delites, containing sundrie new Sonets*, 16mo. 1584:

“ *Rosemary* is for remembrance

“ Betweene us daie and night;

“ Wishing that I might alwaies have

“ You present in my sight.”

The poem in which these lines are found, is entitled *A Nosesgay alwaies sweet for Lovers to send for Tokens of love*, &c. MALONE.

LAER. A document in madness; thoughts and remembrance fitted.

OPH. There's fennel for you, and columbines:⁵
—there's rue for you; and here's some for me:—

⁵ *There's fennel for you, and columbines:] Greene, in his Quip for an Upstart Courtier, 1620, calls fennel, women's weeds: "fit generally for that sex, sith while they are maidens, they wish wantonly."*

Among Turbervile's *Epitaphes*, &c. p. 42, b. I likewise find the following mention of fennel:

"Your fenell did declare
" (As simple men can shewe)
" That flattrie in my breast I bare,
" Where friendship ought to grow."

I know not of what *colombines* were supposed to be emblematical. They are again mentioned in *All Fools*, by Chapman, 1605:

"What's that?—a columbine?
" No: that *thankless* flower grows not in my garden."

Gerard, however, and other herbalists, impute few, if any, virtues to them; and they may therefore be styled *thankless*, because they appear to make no grateful return for their creation.

Again, in the 15th Song of Drayton's *Polyolbion*:

"The columbine amongst, they sparingly do set."

From the *Caltha Poetarum*, 1599, it should seem as if this flower was the emblem of cuckoldom:

"—— the blue *cornuted* columbine
" Like to the crooked horns of Acheloy." STEEVENS.

Columbine was an emblem of cuckoldom, on account of the horns of its nectaria, which are remarkable in this plant. See *Aquilegia*, in Linnæus's *Genera*, 684. S. W.

The columbine was emblematical of forsaken lovers:

"The columbine in tawny often taken,
" Is then ascribed to such as are forsaken."

Brown's *Britannia's Pastorals*, Book I. Song ii. 1613.
HOLT WHITE.

Ophelia gives her fennel and columbines to the king. In the collection of Sonnets quoted above, the former is thus mentioned:

"Fennel is for flatterers,
" An evil thing 'tis sure;
" But I have alwaies meant truly,
" With constant heart most pure."

See also Florio's *Italian Dictionary*, 1598: "*Dare finocchio*, to give fennel,—to flatter, to dissemble." MALONE.

we may call it, herb of grace o'fundays: ⁶—you

⁶ ——— *there's rue for you; and here's some for me:—we may call it, herb of grace o'fundays: &c.*] I believe there is a quibble meant in this passage; *rue* anciently signifying the same as *Ruth*, i. e. sorrow. Ophelia gives the Queen some, and keeps a proportion of it for herself. There is the same kind of play with the same word in *King Richard II.*

Herb of grace is one of the titles which *Tucca* gives to *William Rufus*, in Decker's *Satiromastix*. I suppose the first syllable of the surname *Rufus* introduced the quibble.

In *Doctor Do-good's Directions*, an ancient ballad, is the same allusion:

“ If a man have light fingers that he cannot charme,
“ Which will pick men's pockets, and do such like harme,
“ He must be let blood, in a scarfe weare his arme,
“ And drink the *herb grace* in a posset luke-warme.”

STEEVENS.

The following passage from Greene's *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, will furnish the best reason for calling *rue* herb of grace o'fundays: “ ——— some of them smil'd and said, *Rue* was called *Herbegrace*, which though they scorned in their youth, they might wear in their age, and that it was never too late to say *miserere*.”

HENLEY.

Herb of grace was not the *sunday name*, but the *every day name* of *rue*. In the common dictionaries of Shakspeare's time it is called *herb of grace*. See Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598, in v. *rula*, and Cotgrave's French Dictionary, 1611, in v. *rue*. There is no ground therefore for supposing, with Dr. Warburton, that *rue* was called herb of grace, from its being used in exorcisms performed in churches on Sundays.

Ophelia only means, I think, that the queen may with peculiar propriety on *Sundays*, when she solicits pardon for that crime which she has so much occasion to *rue* and repent of, call her *rue*, *herb of grace*. So, in *King Richard II.*:

“ Here did she drop a tear; here in this place
“ I'll set a bank of *rue*, four *herb of grace*.
“ *Rue*, even for *ruth*, here shortly shall be seen,
“ In the remembrance of a weeping queen.”

Ophelia, after having given the queen *rue* to remind her of the sorrow and contrition she ought to feel for her incestuous marriage, tells her, she may wear it with a difference, to distinguish it from that worn by Ophelia herself; because her tears flowed from the joys of a father, those of the queen ought to flow for her guilt.”

MALONE.

may wear your rue with a difference.⁷—There's a daisy:⁸—I would give you some violets; but they wither'd all, when my father died:⁹—They say, he made a good end,—

*For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy,*²—

[Sings.

⁷ ——— you may wear your rue with a difference.] This seems to refer to the rules of heraldry, where the younger brothers of a family bear the same arms *with a difference*, or mark of distinction. So, in Holinshed's *Reign of King Richard II.* p. 443: "— because he was the youngest of the Spensers, he bare a border gules for a difference."

There may, however, be somewhat more implied here than is expressed. You, madam, (says Ophelia to the Queen,) may call your RUE by its Sunday name, HERB OF GRACE, and so wear it with a difference to distinguish it from mine, which can never be any thing but merely RUE, i. e. sorrow. STEEVENS.

⁸ *There's a daisy:*] Greene, in his *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, has explained the significance of this flower: "— Next them grew the DISSEMBLING DAISIE, to warne such light-of-love wenches not to trust every faire promise that such amorous bachelors make them." HENLEY.

⁹ *I would give you some violets; but they wither'd all, when my father died:*] The violet is thus characterized in the old collection of Sonnets above quoted, printed in 1584:

" Violet is for faithfulness,

" Which in me shall abide;

" Hoping likewise that from your heart

" You will not let it slide." MALONE.

² *For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy,*] This is part of an old song, mentioned likewise by Beaumont and Fletcher, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, A & IV. sc. i:

" ——— I can sing the broom,

" And Bonny Robin."

In the books of the Stationers' Company, 26 April, 1594, is entered "A ballad, intituled, A doleful adewe to the last Erle of Darbie, to the tune of *Bonny sweet Robin*." STEEVENS.

The "Courtly new ballad of the princely wooing of the faire maid of London, by King Edward," is also "to the tune of *Bonny sweet Robin*." RITSON.

LAER. Thought and affliction,³ passion, hell it-
self,
She turns to favour, and to prettiness.

OPH. *And will he not come again?* [Sings.
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,⁴
All flaxen was his poll:
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan;
God 'a mercy on his soul!

And of all christian souls!⁵ I pray God. God be
wi' you! [Exit OPHELIA.

LAER. Do you see this, O God?

³ Thought and affliction,] *Thought* here, as in many other places, signifies melancholy. See Vol. XVIII. p. 334, n. 7. MALONE.

⁴ *His beard was as white as snow, &c.*] This, and several circumstances in the character of Ophelia, seem to have been ridiculed in *Eastward Hoe*, a comedy, written by Ben Jonson, Chapman, and Marston, printed in 1605, A& III:

“ His head as white as milk,
“ All flaxen was his hair;
“ But now he's dead,
“ And laid in his bed,
“ And never will come again,
“ God be at your labour!” STEEVENS.

⁵ *God 'a mercy on his soul!*

And of all christian souls!] This is the common conclusion to many of the ancient monumental inscriptions. See Weever's *Funeral Monuments*, p. 657, 658. Berthelette, the publisher of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, 1554, speaking first of the funeral of Chaucer, and then of Gower, says: “ — he lieth buried in the monastherie of Seynt Peter's at Westminster, &c. On whose soules and all christen, Jesu have mercie.” STEEVENS.

KING. Laertes, I must commune with your grief,⁶
 Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
 Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
 And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me :
 If by direct or by collateral hand
 They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
 Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
 To you in satisfaction ; but, if not,
 Be you content to lend your patience to us,
 And we shall jointly labour with your soul
 To give it due content.

LAER. Let this be so ;
 His means of death, his obscure funeral,—
 No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones,⁷
 No noble rite, nor formal ostentation,—
 Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
 That I must call't in question.

KING. So you shall ;
 And, where the offence is, let the great axe fall.
 I pray you, go with me. [Exeunt.]

⁶ — commune with your grief,] The folio reads—common. To common is to commune. This word, pronounced as anciently spelt, is still in frequent provincial use. So, in *The last Voyage of Captaine Frobisher*, by Dionyse Settle, 12mo. bl. l. 1577: "Our Generall repayred with the ship boat to common or sign with them." Again, in Holinshed's account of Jack Cade's insurrection:—" — to whome were sent from the king the archbishop &c. to common with him of his griefs and requests." STEEVENS.

⁷ No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones,] It was the custom, in the times of our author, to hang a sword over the grave of a knight. JOHNSON.

This practice is uniformly kept up to this day. Not only the sword, but the helmet, gauntlet, spurs, and tabard (i. e. a coat whereon the armorial ensigns were anciently depicted, from whence the term *coat of armour*) are hung over the grave of every knight.

SIR J. HAWKINS.

S C E N E IV.

Another Room in the same.

Enter HORATIO, and a Servant.

HOR. What are they, that would speak with me?

SERV. Sailors, fir ;

They say, they have letters for you.

HOR. Let them come in.—

[Exit Servant.]

I do not know from what part of the world

I should be greeted, if not from lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors.

1. SAIL. God blefs you, fir.

HOR. Let him blefs thee too.

1. SAIL. He shall fir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, fir ; it comes from the ambaffador that was bound for England ; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

HOR. [Reads.] Horatio, when thou shalt have overlook'd this, give these fellows some means to the king ; they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chace : Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compell'd valour ; and in the grapple I boarded them : on the instant, they got clear of our ship ; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me, like thieves of mercy ; but they knew what they did ; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent ; and repair thou to me with as much haste as thou would'st fly death. I

have words to speak in thine ear, will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosen-
crantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

He that thou knowest thine, Hamlet.
Come, I will give you way for these your letters;
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.

Another Room in the same.

Enter KING *and* LAERTES.

KING. Now must your conscience my acquittance
 feal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend ;
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he, which hath your noble father slain,
Pursu'd my life.

LAER. It well appears : — But tell me,
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, greatness, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirr'd up.

KING. O, for two special reasons ;
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unfinew'd,
But yet to me they are strong. The queen, his
mother,

² — *for the bore of the matter.*] The *bore* is the caliber of a gun, or the capacity of the barrel. The *matter* (says Hamlet) *would carry heavier words.* JOHNSON.

Lives almost by his looks ; and for myself,
 (My virtue, or my plague, be it either which,)
 She is so conjunctive to my life and soul,
 That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
 I could not but by her. The other motive,
 Why to a publick count I might not go,
 Is, the great love the general gender⁹ bear him:
 Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
 Work like the spring² that turneth wood to stone,
 Convert his gyves to graces ; so that my arrows,
 Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,³
 Would have reverted to my bow again,
 And not where I had aim'd them.

⁹ — the general gender—] The common race of the people.

JOHNSON.

² Work like the spring &c.] This simile is neither very reasonable in the deep interest of this conversation, nor very accurately applied. If the *spring* had changed base metals to gold, the thought had been more proper. JOHNSON.

The folio, instead of—*work*, reads—*would*.

The same comparison occurs in Churchyard's *Choise*:

“ So there is wood that water turns to stones.”

In Thomas Lupton's *Third Book of Notable Things*, 4to. bl. 1. there is also mention of “ a well, that whatsoever is throwne into the same, is turned into a stone.” STEEVENS.

The allusion here is to the qualities still ascribed to the dropping well at Knaresborough in Yorkshire. Camden (edit. 1590, p. 564.) thus mentions it: “ Sub quo fons est in quem ex impendentibus rupibus aquæ guttatim distillant, unde DROPPING WELL vocant in quem quicquid ligni immittitur, lapideo cortici brevi obduce & lapidescere observatum est.” REED.

³ — for so loud a wind,] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads—for so *loved* arm'd. If these words have any meaning, it should seem to be—The instruments of offence I employ, would have proved too weak to injure one who is so *loved and arm'd* by the affection of the people. Their love, like *armour*, would revert the arrow to the bow. STEEVENS.

Loued arm'd is as extraordinary a corruption as any that is found in these plays. MALONE.

LAER. And so have I a noble father lost;
 A sister driven into desperate terms;
 Whose worth, if praises may go back again,⁴
 Stood challenger on mount of all the age
 For her perfections:—But my revenge will come.

KING. Break not your sleeps for that: you must
 not think,

That we are made of stuff so flat and dull,
 That we can let our beard be shook with danger,⁵
 And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear
 more:

I lov'd your father, and we love ourself;
 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine,—
 How now? what news?⁶

Enter a Messenger.

MESS. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:⁷
 This to your majesty; this to the queen.

KING. From Hamlet! Who brought them?

MESS. Sailors, my lord, they say: I saw them not;
 They were given me by Claudio, he receiv'd them
 Of him that brought them.⁸

KING. Laertes you shall hear them:—
 Leave us. *[Exit Messenger.]*

⁴ —if praises may go back again,] If I may praise what has been, but is now to be found no more. JOHNSON.

⁵ That we can let our beard be shook with danger,] It is wonderful that none of the advocates for the learning of Shakspeare have told us that this line is imitated from Persius, Sat. ii:

“ Idcirco stolidam præbet tibi vellere barbam

“ Jupiter?” STEEVENS.

⁶ How now? &c.] Omitted in the quartos. THEOBALD.

⁷ Letters, &c.] Omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

⁸ Of him that brought them.] I have restored this hemistich from the quartos. STEEVENS.

[Reads.] *High and mighty, you shall know, I am set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes; when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return.* Hamlet.

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back? Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

LAER. Know you the hand?

KING. 'Tis Hamlet's character. *Naked,—*
And, in a postscript here, he says, *alone;*
Can you advise me?

LAER. I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come;

It warms the very sickness in my heart,
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
Thus diddest thou.

KING. If it be so, Laertes,—
As how should it be so?—how otherwise?—
Will you be rul'd by me?

LAER. Ay, my lord;
So you will not o'er-rule me to a peace.

KING. To thine own peace. If he be now re-
turn'd,—

As checking at his voyage,⁹ and that he means

⁹ *As checking at his voyage,*] The phrase is from falconry; and may be justified from the following passage in Hinde's *Eliofo Libidinofo*, 1606: "——For who knows not, quoth she, that this hawk, which comes now so fair to the fist, may to-morrow *check* at the lure?"

Again, in G. Whetstone's *Castle of Delight*, 1576:

"But as the hawke, to gad which knowes the way,

"Will hardly leave to *checke* at carren crowes," &c.

STEEVENS.

As checking at his voyage,] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, exhibits a corruption similar to that mentioned in n. 3, p. 283. It reads:—*As the king at his voyage.* MALONE.

No more to undertake it,—I will work him
 To an exploit, now ripe in my device,
 Under the which he shall not choofe but fall :
 And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe;
 But even his mother shall uncharge the practice,
 And call it, accident.

LAER.² My lord, I will be rul'd ;
 The rather, if you could devise it so,
 That I might be the organ.

KING. It falls right.
 You have been talk'd of fince your travel much,
 And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
 Wherein, they fay, you fhine : your fum of parts
 Did not together pluck fuch envy from him,
 As did that one ; and that, in my regard,
 Of the unworthieft fiece.³

LAER. What part is that, my lord ?

KING. A very ribband in the cap of youth,
 Yet needful too ; for youth no lefs becomes
 The light and carelefs livery that it wears,
 Than fettled age his fables, and his weeds,
 Importing health and gravenefs.⁴—Two months
 fince,

² *Laer. &c.*] The next fixteen lines are omitted in the folio.
 STEEVENS.

³ *Of the unworthieft fiece.*] Of the loweft rank. *Siege*, for *feat*,
place. JOHNSON.

So, in *Othello* :

“ ——— I fetch my birth

“ From men of royal *siege*.” STEEVENS.

⁴ *Importing health and gravenefs.*] *Importing* here may be, not
inferring by logical confequence, but *producing* by phyfical effect.
 A young man regards fhew in his drefs, an old man, *health*.

JOHNSON.

Importing health, I apprehend, means, *denoting an attention to*
health. MALONE.

Here was a gentleman of Normandy,—
 I have seen myself, and serv'd against, the French,
 And they can well on horseback: but this gallant
 Had witchcraft in't; he grew unto his seat;
 And to such wond'rous doing brought his horse,
 As he had been incorps'd and demi-natur'd
 With the brave beast:⁵ so far he topp'd my thought,
 That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,⁶
 Come short of what he did.

LAER. A Norman, was't?

KING. A Norman.

LAER. Upon my life, Lamord.⁷

KING. The very same.

LAER. I know him well: he is the brooch, indeed,

And gem of all the nation.

KING. He made confession of you;
 And gave you such a masterly report,
 For art and exercise in your defence,⁸
 And for your rapier most especial,
 That he cried out, 'twould be a fight indeed,

Importing may only signify—*implying, denoting.* So, in *King Henry IV.* Part I:

“Comets, *importing* change of times and states.”

Mr. Malone's explanation, however, may be the true one.

STEEVENS.

⁵ *As he had been incorps'd and demi-natur'd*

With the brave beast:] This is from Sidney's *Arcadia*, B. II:

“As if, Centaur-like, he had been one peece with the horse.”

STEEVENS.

⁶ — *in forgery of shapes and tricks,]* I could not contrive so many proofs of dexterity as he could perform. JOHNSON.

⁷ *Lamord.]* Thus the quarto, 1604. Shakspeare, I suspect, wrote *Lamode*. See the next speech but one. The folio has—*Lamound.* MALONE.

⁸ — *In your defence,]* That is, in the *science* of defence.

JOHNSON.

If one could match you : the scrimers⁹ of their nation,

He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you oppos'd them: Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy,
That he could nothing do, but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with you.
Now, out of this,——

LAER. What out of this, my lord?

KING. Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

LAER. Why ask you this?

KING. Not that I think, you did not love your
father;

But that I know, love is begun by time;²
And that I see, in passages of proof,³
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives⁴ within the very flame of love

⁹ —— *the scrimers* ——] *The fencers.* JOHNSON.

From *escrimeur*, Fr. a fencer. MALONE.

This unfavourable description of the French swordsmen is not in the folio. STEEVENS.

² —— *love is begun by time* ;] This is obscure, The meaning may be, *love* is not innate in us, and co-essential to our nature, but begins at a certain time from some external cause, and being always subject to the operations of time, suffers change and diminution.

JOHNSON.

The king reasons thus:—" I do not suspect that you did not love your father ; but I know that time abates the force of affection." I therefore suspect that we ought to read :

—— *love is begone by time* ;

I suppose that Shakspeare places the syllable *be* before *gone*, as we say *be-paint*, *be-spatter*, *be-think*, &c. M. MASON.

³ —— *passages of proof*,] In transactions of daily experience.

JOHNSON.

⁴ *There lives* &c.] The next ten lines are not in the folio.

STEEVENS.

A kind of wick, or snuff, that will abate it;
 And nothing is at a like goodnefs still;
 For goodnefs, growing to a plurify,⁵
 Dies in his own too-much: That we would do,
 We should do when we would; for this *would*
 changes,
 And hath abatements and delays as many,

⁵ For goodnefs, growing to a plurify,] I would believe, for the honour of Shakspeare, that he wrote *plethory*. But I observe the dramattick writers of that time frequently call a fullnefs of blood a *plurify*, as if it came, not from *πλευρά*, but from *plus, pluris*.

WARBURTON.

I think the word should be spelt — *plurify*. This passage is fully explained by one in Mascall's treatise on cattle, 1622, p. 187: "Against the blood, or *plurifie* of blood. The disease of blood is, some young horses will feed, and being fat will *increase* blood, and so grow to a *plurifie*, and die thereof if he have not soon help."

TOLLET.

We should certainly read *plurify*, as Tollet observes. Thus, in Massinger's *Unnatural Combat*, Malefort says

" ————— in a word,

" Thy *plurify* of goodnefs is thy ill."

And again, in *The Picture*, Sophia says:

" A *plurify* of blood you may let out," &c.

The word also occurs in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Arcite, in his invocation to Mars, says:

" ————— that heal'st with blood

" The earth, when it is sick, and cur'st the world

" Of the *plurify* of people!" M. MASON.

Dr. Warburton is right. The word is spelt *plurify* in the quarto, 1504, and is used in the same sense as here, in *'Tis Pity she's a Whore*, by Ford, 1633:

" Must your hot itch and *plurifie* of lust,

" The hey-day of your luxury, be fed

" Up to a surfeit?" MALONE.

Mr. Pope introduced this simile in the *Essay on Criticism*, v. 303:

" For works may have more wit than does them good,

" As bodies perish through excess of blood."

Ascham has a thought very similar to Pope's: "Twenty to one, offend more, in writing to much, then to litle: *euen as twenty, fall into sicknesse, rather by ouer much fulnes, then by any lacke or emptinesse*." *The Schole-Master*, 4to. bl. 1. fol. 43. HOLT WHITE.

As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;
 And then this *should* is like a spendthrift sigh,
 That hurts by easing.⁶ But, to the quick o'the
 ulcer:

* *And then this should is like a spendthrift sigh,*

That hurts by easing.] A *spendthrift sigh* is a *sigh* that makes an unnecessary waste of the vital flame. It is a notion very prevalent that *sighs* impair the strength, and wear out the animal powers.

JOHNSON.

So, in the *Governall of Helthe* &c. printed by Wynkyn de Worde:
 "And for why whan a man casteth out that noble humour too
 moche, he is hugely dyscolored, and his body moche febled, more
 then he lete four *sythes*, soo moche blode oute of his body."

STEEVENS.

Hence they are called, in *King Henry VI.* — blood consuming
sighs. Again, in *Pericles*, 1609:

"Do not consume your blood with sorrowing."

The idea is enlarged upon in Fenton's *Tragical Discourses*, 1579:
 "Why staye you not in tyme the source of your scorching *sighes*,
 that have already drayned your body of his wholesome humoures,
 appoynted by nature to gyve sucke to the entrals and inward parts
 of you?"

The original quarto, as well as the folio, reads — a spendthrift's
sigh: but I have no doubt that it was a corruption, arising from the
 first letter of the following word *sigh*, being an *s*. I have there-
 fore, with the other modern editors, printed — *spendthrift sigh*, fol-
 lowing a late quarto, (which however is of no authority,) printed
 in 1611. That a *sigh*, if it consumes the blood, *hurts us by easing*,
 or is prejudicial to us on the whole, though it affords a tempo-
 rary relief, is sufficiently clear: but the former part of the line,
and then this should, may require a little explanation. I suppose
 the king means to say, that if we do not promptly execute what
 we are convinced we *should* or ought to do, we shall afterwards
 in vain repent our not having seized the fortunate moment for
 action: and this opportunity which we have let go by us, and
 the reflection that we *should* have done that, which, from super-
 vening accidents, it is no longer in our power to do, is as pre-
 judicial and painful to us as a blood-consuming *sigh*, that at once
 hurts and eases us.

I apprehend the poet meant to compare such a conduct, and the
 consequent reflection, only to the pernicious quality which he sup-
 posed to be annexed to sighing, and not to the temporary ease which
 it affords. His similes, as I have frequently had occasion to ob-
 serve, seldom run on four feet. MALONE.

Hamlet comes back; What would you undertake,
To show yourself in deed your father's son
More than in words?

LAER. To cut his throat i'the church.

KING. No place, indeed, should murder sanctua-
rize;

Revenge should have no bounds. But, good La-
ertes,

Will you do this, keep close within your chamber:
Hamlet, return'd, shall know you are come home:
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
And set a double varnish on the fame

The Frenchman gave you; bring you, in fine, to-
gether,

And wager o'er your heads: he, being remiss,⁷
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated,⁸ and, in a pass of practice,⁹

⁷ — *he, being remiss,*] He being not vigilant or cautious.

JOHNSON.

⁸ *A sword unbated,*] i. e. not blunted as foils are. Or, as one
edition has it, *embaited* or *envenomed*. POPE.

There is no such reading as *embaited* in any edition. In Sir
Thomas North's translation of Plutarch, it is said of one of the
Metelli, that "he shewed the people the cruel fight of fencers, at
unrebated swords." STEEVENS.

Not blunted, as foils are by a button fixed to the end. So, in
Love's Labour's Lost:

"That honour, which shall *bate* his scythe's keen edge."

MALONE.

⁹ — *a pass of practice,*] Practice is often by Shakspeare, and
other writers, taken for an *insidious stratagem*, or *privy treason*, a
sense not incongruous to this passage, where yet I rather believe,
that nothing more is meant than a *thrust for exercise*.

JOHNSON.

So, in *Look about you*, 1600:

"I pray God there be no *practice* in this change."

Requite him for your father.

LAER.

I will do't:

And, for the purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal, that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood, no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death,
That is but scratch'd withal: I'll touch my point
With this contagion; that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.²

KING.

Let's further think of this;
Weigh, what convenience, both of time and means,
May fit us to our shape:³ if this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad perform-
ance,

Again:

" ——— the man is like to die:

" *Prædlice*, by th' mass, *prædlice* by the &c. ———

" *Prædlice*, by the Lord, *prædlice*, I see it clear."

Again, more appositely in our author's *Twelfth Night*, A & V.
sc. ult:

" This *prædlice* hath most shrewdly *pass'd* upon thee."

STEEVENS.

A *pass* of *prædlice* is a favourite *pass*, one that Laertes was well
practised in.— In *Much Ado about Nothing*, Hero's father says:

" I'll prove it on his body, if he dare,

" Despite his nice fence, and his active *prædlice*."

The treachery on this occasion, was his using a sword *unbated* and
envenomed. M. MASON.

² *It may be death.*] It is a matter of surprise, that no one of
Shakspeare's numerous and able commentators has remarked, with
proper warmth and detestation, the villainous assassin-like treachery
of Laertes in this horrid plot. There is the more occasion that he
should be here pointed out an object of abhorrence, as he is a cha-
racter we are, in some preceding parts of the play, led to respect
and admire. RITSON.

³ *May fit us to our shape:*] *May enable us to assume proper cha-
racters, and to act our part.* JOHNSON.

'Twere better not assay'd; therefore, this project
Should have a back, or second, that might hold,
If this should blast in proof.⁴ Soft; — let me see: —
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings, —
I ha't:

When in your motion you are hot and dry,
(As make your bouts more violent to that end,)
And that he calls for drink, I'll have preferr'd
him⁵

A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,⁶
Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise?

⁴ — — *blast in proof.*] This, I believe, is a metaphor taken from a mine, which, in the proof or execution, sometimes breaks out with an ineffectual *blast*. JOHNSON.

The word *proof* shows the metaphor to be taken from the trying or proving fire-arms or cannon, which often *blast* or *burst* in the *proof*. STEEVENS.

⁵ — — *I'll have preferr'd him* —] i. e. presented to him. Thus the quarto, 1604. The word indeed is misspelt, *prefard*. The folio reads — *I'll have prepar'd him*. MALONE.

To *prefer* (as Mr. Malone observes) certainly means—to *present*, or *offer*. So, in *Timon of Athens*:

“Why then *preferr'd* you not your fums and bill's?”

STEEVENS.

⁶ *If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,*] For *stuck*, read *tuck*, a common name for a rapier. BLACKSTONE.

Your venom'd *stuck* is, your venom'd thrust. *Stuck* was a term of the fencing-school. So, in *Twelfth Night*: “—— and he gives me the *stuck* with such a mortal motion, ——.” Again, in *The Return from Parnassus*, 1606: “Here is a fellow, *Judicio*, that carried the deadly *stocke* in his pen.” — See Florio's Italian Dict. 1598: “*Stoccata*, a foyne, a thrust, a *stoccado* given in fence.”

MALONE.

See Vol. V. p. 345, n. 6. STEEVENS.

⁷ — — *But stay, what noise?*] I have recovered this from the quartos. STEEVENS.

Enter Queen.

How now, sweet queen?⁸

QUEEN. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,⁹
So fast they follow:— Your sister's drown'd Laertes.

LAER. Drown'd! O, where?

QUEEN. There is a willow grows ascaunt the
brook,²

That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
Therewith fantastick garlands did she make
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daifies, and long purples,³

⁸ *How now, sweet queen?*] These words are not in the quarto. The word *now*, which appears to have been omitted by the carelessness of the transcriber or compositor, was supplied by the editor of the second folio. MALONE.

⁹ *One woe doth tread upon another's heel,*] A similar thought occurs in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, 1609:

“ One sorrow never comes, but brings an heir,

“ That may succeed as his inheritor.” STEEVENS.

Again, in Drayton's *Mortimeriados*, 4to. 1596:

“ ——— miseries, which seldom come alone,

“ Thick on the neck one of another fell.”

Again, in Shakspeare's 131st Sonnet:

“ A thousand groans, but thinking on thy fall,

“ One on another's neck, ———.” MALONE.

Again, in *Lochrine*, 1595:

“ One mischief follows on another's neck.”

And this also is the first line of a queen's speech on a lady's drowning herself. RITSON.

² ——— *ascaunt the brook,*] Thus the quartos. The folio reads — *aslant*. *Ascaunce* is interpreted in a note of Mr. Tyrwhitt's on Chaucer — *askew, aside, sideways*. STEEVENS.

³ ——— *and long purples,*] By *long purples* is meant a plant, the modern botanical name of which is *orchis morio mas*, anciently *testiculus morionis*. The grosser name by which it passes, is sufficiently known in many parts of England, and particularly in the county where Shakspeare lived. Thus far Mr. Warner. Mr. Collins adds

That liberal⁴ shepherds give a grosser name,
 But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:
 There on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds
 Clambering to hang, an envious fliver broke;
 When down her weedy trophies, and herself,
 Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread
 wide;
 And, mermaid-like, a while they bore her up:
 Which time, she chanted snatches of old tunes;⁵
 As one incapable of her own distress,⁶

that in Suffex it is still called *dead men's hands*; and that in Lyte's *Herbal*, 1578, its various names, too gross for repetition, are preserved.

Dead men's thumbs are mentioned in an ancient bl. l. ballad, entitled *The deceased Maiden Lover*:

"Then round the meddowes did she walke,
 "Catching each flower by the stalke,
 "Such as within the meddowes grew;
 "As *dead mans thumbe*, and hare-bell blew." STEEVENS.

One of the grosser names of this plant Gertrude had a particular reason to avoid:—*the rampant widow*. MALONE.

⁴ — liberal —] *Licentious*. See Vol. IV. p. 242, n. 9; Vol. VI. p. 326, n. 4; Vol. VII. p. 363, n. 6. and Vol. VIII. p. 46, n. 3. REED.

Liberal is free-spoken, licentious in language. So, in *Othello*:
 "Is he not a most profane and *liberal* counsellor?" Again, in *A Woman's a Weathercock*, by N. Field, 1612?

"——— Next that, the same
 "Of your neglect, and *liberal*-talking tongue,
 "Which breeds my honour and eternal wrong." MALONE.

⁵ Which time, she chanted snatches of old tunes;] Fletcher, in his *Scornful Lady*, very invidiously ridicules this incident:

"I will run mad first, and if that get not pity,
 "I'll drown myself to a most dismal ditty."

WARBURTON.

The quartos read — snatches of old *lauds*, i. e. hymns.

STEEVENS.

⁶ As one incapable of her own distress,] As one having no understanding or knowledge of her danger. See p. 233, n. 9.

MALONE.

That is, insensible. So, in *King Richard III*:

"Incapable and shallow innocents." RITSON.

Or like a creature native and indu'd
 Unto that element:⁷ but long it could not be,
 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
 Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
 To muddy death.⁸

LAER. Alas then, she is drown'd?

QUEEN. Drown'd, drown'd.

LAER. Too much of water hast thou, poor
 Ophelia,

And therefore I forbid my tears: But yet
 It is our trick; nature her custom holds,
 Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,
 The woman will be out.⁹ — Adieu, my lord!

⁷ *Or like a creature native and indu'd*

Unto that element:] I do not think the word *indued* is sense in this place; and believe we should read *inured*.

Shakspeare seems to have forgot himself in this scene, as there is not a single circumstance in the relation of Ophelia's death, that induces us to think she had drowned herself intentionnally.

M. MASON.

As we are indued with certain original dispositions and propensities at our birth, Shakspeare here uses *indued* with great licentiousness, for formed by nature; clothed, endowed, or furnished, with properties suited to the element of water.

Our old writers used *indued* and *endowed* indiscriminately. "To indue," says Minshew in his Dictionary, "sepissime refertur ad dotes animo infusas, quibus nimirum ingenium alicujus imbutum & initiatum est, unde & G. *instruire* est. L. *imbuere*. *Imbuere* proprie est inchoare & initiari."

In Cotgrave's French Dictionary, 1611, *instruire* is interpreted, "to fashion, to furnish with." MALONE.

⁸ *To muddy death.*] In the first scene of the next act we find Ophelia buried with such rites as betoken she *foredid* her own life. It should be remembered, that the account here given, is that of a friend; and that the queen could not possibly know what passed in the mind of Ophelia, when she placed herself in so perilous a situation. After the fact had been weighed and considered, the priest in the next act pronounces, that *her death was doubtful*. MALONE.

⁹ *The woman will be out.*] i. e. tears will flow. So, in *K. Henry V*:

"And all the woman came into my eyes." MALONE.

See Vol. XIII. p. 450, n. 7. STEEVENS.

I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
But that this folly drowns it.² [Exit.

KING. Let's follow, Gertrude:
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I, this will give it start again;
Therefore, let's follow. [Exeunt.

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Church-yard.

Enter two Clowns, with spades, &c.

1. CLO. Is she to be bury'd in christian burial,
that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

2. CLO. I tell thee, she is; therefore, make her
grave straight:³ the crowner hath set on her, and
finds it christian burial.

² *But that this folly drowns it.*] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads—But that this folly *doubts* it, i. e. *douts*, or extinguishes it. See p. 63, n. 6. MALONE.

³ *— make her grave straight:*] Make her grave from east to west in a direct line parallel to the church; not from north to south, athwart the regular line. This, I think, is meant.

JOHNSON.

I cannot think that this means any more than *make her grave immediately*. She is to be buried in *christian burial*, and consequently the grave is to be made as usual. My interpretation may be justified from the following passages in *King Henry V.* and the play before us: “— We cannot lodge and board a dozen or fourteen gentlewomen who live by the prick of their needles, but it will be thought we keep a bawdy-house *straight*.”

1. CLO. How can that be, unless she drown'd herself in her own defence?

2. CLO. Why, 'tis found so.

1. CLO. It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: If I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act: and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform:⁴ Argal, she drown'd herself wittingly.

2. CLO. Nay, but hear you, Goodman delver.

1. CLO. Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: If the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes; mark you that: but if the water come to him, and drown him, he drowns not himself: Argal, he, that is not guilty of his own death, shortens not his own life.

2. CLO. But is this law?

1. CLO. Ay, marry is't; crowner's-quest law.⁵

Again, in *Hamlet*, Act III. sc. iv:

"Pol. He will come *straight*."

Again, in *The Lover's Progress*, by Beaumont and Fletcher:

"Lis. Do you fight *straight*?"

"Clar. Yes, presently."

Again, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*:

"—— we'll come and dress you *straight*."

Again, in *Othello*:

"Farewell, my Desdemona, I will come to thee *straight*."

STEEVENS.

Again, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

"Let us make ready *straight*." MALONE.

⁴ — an act hath tree branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform:] Ridicule on scholastick divisions without distinction; and of distinctions without difference. WARBURTON.

⁵ — crowner's quest-law.] I strongly suspect that this is a ridicule on the case of Dame Hales, reported by Plowden in his commentaries, as determined in 3 Eliz.

It seems, her husband sir James Hales had drowned himself in a river; and the question was, whether by this act a forfeiture of a

2. CLO. Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been bury'd out of christian burial.

1. CLO. Why, there thou say'st: And the more pity; that great folks should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even christian.⁶ Come; my spade. There

lease from the dean and chapter of Canterbury, which he was possessed of, did not accrue to the crown: an inquisition was found before the coroner, which found him *felo de se*. The legal and logical subtilties, arising in the course of the argument of this case, gave a very fair opportunity for a sneer at *crowner's quest-law*. The expression, a little before, that *an aē hath three branches*, &c. is so pointed an allusion to the case I mention, that I cannot doubt but that Shakspeare was acquainted with, and meant to laugh at it.

It may be added, that on this occasion a great deal of subtilty was used, to ascertain whether sir James was the *agent* or the *patient*; or, in other words, whether *he went to the water, or the water came to him*. The cause of sir James's madness was the circumstance of his having been the judge who condemned *lady Jane Gray*. SIR J. HAWKINS.

If Shakspeare meant to allude to the case of Dame Hales, (which indeed seems not improbable,) he must have heard of that case in conversation; for it was determined before he was born, and Plowden's Commentaries, in which it is reported, were not translated into English till a few years ago. Our author's study was probably not much encumbered with old French Reports.

MALONE.

⁶ ——— *their even christian.*] So, all the old books, and rightly. An old English expression for fellow-christian. THIRLBY.

So, in Chaucer's *Jack Upland*: "If freres cannot or mow not excuse 'hem of these questions asked of 'hem, it seemeth that they be horrible giltie against God, and *ther even christian*;" &c.

Again, in Gower, *De Confessione Amantis*, Lib. V. fol. 102:

"Of beautie fighe he never hir *even*."

Again, Chaucer's *Persones Tale*: "—— of his neighbour, that is to sayn, of his *even christen*," &c. This phrase also occurs frequently in the *Paston Letters*. See Vol. III. p. 421, &c. &c.

"That is to say, in relieving and sustenance of your *even christen*," &c.—Again, "—— to dispose and help your *even christen*."

STEEVENS.

So, King Henry Eighth, in his answer to parliament in 1546:

is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

2. CLO. Was he a gentleman?

1. CLO. He was the first that ever bore arms.

2. CLO.⁷ Why, he had none.

1. CLO. What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the scripture? The scripture says, Adam digg'd; Could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answer'st me not to the purpose, confess thyself—⁸

2. CLO. Go to.

1. CLO. What is he, that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

2. CLO. The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1. CLO. I like thy wit well, in good faith; the gallows does well: But how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now thou dost ill, to say, the gallows is built stronger than the church; argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again; come.

2. CLO. Who builds ⁹ stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

"—— you might say that I, beyng put in so speciall a trust as I am in this case, were no trustie frende to you, nor charitable man to mine *even christian*,—." Hall's Chronicle, fol. 261.

MALONE.

⁷ 2. Clo.] This speech, and the next as far as—*without arms*, is not in the quartos. STEEVENS.

⁸ —— *confess thyself*——] *and be hang'd*, the Clown, I suppose, would have said, if he had not been interrupted. This was a common proverbial sentence. See *Othello*, A& IV. sc. i.—He might, however, have intended to say, *confess thyself an ass*.

MALONE.

⁹ *Who builds &c.*] The inquisitive reader may meet with an as-

1. CLO. Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.²

2. CLO. Marry, now I can tell.

1. CLO. To't.

2. CLO. Mafs, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.

1. CLO. Cudgel thy brains no more about it;³
for your dull afs will not mend his pace with
beating: and, when you are ask'd this question
next, fay, a grave-maker; the houfes that he makes,
laft till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan, and
fetch me a ftoup of liquor. [Exit 2. Clown.

semblage of fuch queries (which perhaps compofed the chief fefti-
vity of our ancestors by an evening fire) in a volume of very fcarce
tracts, preferved in the Univerfity Library at Cambridge, D. 5. 2.
The innocence of thefe *Demaundes Joyous* may deserve a praife
which is not always due to their delicacy. STEEVENS.

² *Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.*] If it be not fufficient to fay,
with Dr. Warburton, that this phrafe might be taken from huf-
bandry, without much depth of reading, we may produce it from
a dittie of the workmen of Dover, preferved in the additions to
Holinshed, p. 1546:

“ My bow is broke, I would *unyoke*,

“ My foot is fore, I can worke no more.” FARMER.

Again, in Drayton's *Polyolbion*, at the end of Song I:

“ Here I'll *unyoke* a while and turne my fteeds to meat.”

Again, in P. Holland's tranflation of Pliny's *Natural History*,
p. 593: “ ——— in the evening, and when thou doft *unyoke*.”

STEEVENS.

³ *Cudgel thy brains no more about it;*] So, in *The Maydes Meta-
morphofis*, by Lyly, 1600:

“ In vain, I fear, I *beat my brains* about,

“ Proving by fearch to find my miftrefle out.” MALONE.

He digs, and sings.

*In youth when I did love, did love,⁴
Methought, it was very sweet,
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove
O, methought, there was nothing meet.⁵*

⁴ *In youth when I did love, &c.]* The three stanzas, sung here by the grave-digger, are extracted, with a slight variation, from a little poem, called *The aged Lover renounceth Love*, written by Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, who flourished in the reign of king Henry VIII. and who was beheaded 1547, on a strained accusation of treason. THEOBALD.

⁵ *To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove
O, methought, there was nothing meet.]* This passage, as it stands, is absolute nonsense; but if we read "for aye," instead of "for ah" it will have some kind of sense, as it may mean "that it was not meet, though he was in love, to contract himself for ever." M. MASON.

Dr. Percy is of opinion that the different corruptions in these stanzas, might have been "designed by the poet himself, the better to paint the character of an illiterate clown."

Behove is interest, convenience. So, in the 4th Book of Phædrus's version of the *Æneid*:

"—— wilt for thyne own *behove*." STEEVENS.

—— *nothing meet.*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads:
O me thought there a was nothing a meet. MALONE.

The original poem from which this stanza is taken, like the other succeeding ones, is preserved among lord Surrey's poems; though, as Dr. Percy has observed, it is attributed to lord Vaux by George Gascoigne. See an epistle prefixed to one of his poems, printed with the rest of his works, 1575. By others it is supposed to have been written by sir Thomas Wyatt:

"I lothe that I did love;
"In yonth that I thought swete:
"As time requires for my behove,
"Methinks they are not mete."

All these difficulties however (says the Rev. Thomas Warton, *History of English Poetry*, Vol. III. p. 45,) are at once adjusted by MS. Harl. 1703, 25, in the British Museum, in which we have a copy of Vaux's poem, beginning, *I lothe that I did love*, with the

HAM. Has this fellow no feeling of his business? he sings at grave-making.

HOR. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

HAM. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

1. CLO. *But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me into the land,
As if I had never been such.*⁶

[Throws up a scull.

HAM. That scull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: How the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches;⁷ one that would circumvent God, might it not?

title "A dyttie or sonet made by the lord Vaus, in the time of the noble quene Marye, representing the image of death."

The entire song is published by Dr. Percy, in the first volume of his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. STEEVENS.

⁶ *As if I had never been such.*] Thus, in the original:

"For age with stealing steps

"Hath claude me with his crouch;

"And lusty youthe away he leapes,

"As there had bene none such." STEEVENS.

⁷ — which this ass now o'er-reaches;] The folio reads—*o'er-offices*. STEEVENS.

In the quarto, [1604] for *over-offices* is *over-reaches*, which agrees better with the sentence: it is a strong exaggeration to remark, that an *ass* can *over-reach* him who would once have tried to *circumvent*—. I believe both these words were Shakspeare's. An author in revising his work, when his original ideas have faded from his mind, and new observations have produced new sentiments, easily introduces images which have been more newly impressed upon him, without observing their want of congruity to the general texture of his original design. JOHNSON.

HOR. It might, my lord.

HAM. Or of a courtier; which could say, *Good-morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?* This might be my lord such-a-one, that prais'd my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it;⁸ might it not?

HOR. Ay, my lord.

HAM. Why, e'en so: and now my lady Worm's;⁹ chapless, and knock'd about the mazzard with a sexton's spade: Here's fine revolution, and we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with them?¹⁰ mine ache to think on't.

⁸ *This might be my lord such-a-one, that prais'd my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it;]* So, in *Timon of Athens*, A& I:

“ — my lord, you gave

“ Good words the other day of a bay courser

“ I rode on; it is yours, because you lik'd it.”

STEEVENS.

⁹ *— and now my lady Worm's;]* The scull that was my lord Such-a-one's, is now my lady Worm's. JOHNSON.

¹⁰ *— to play at loggats with them?]* This is a game played in several parts of England even at this time. A stake is fixed into the ground; those who play, throw *loggats* at it, and he that is nearest the stake, wins: I have seen it played in different counties at their sheep-sheering feasts, where the winner was entitled to a black fleece, which he afterwards presented to the farmer's maid to spin for the purpose of making a petticoat, and on condition that she knelt down on the fleece to be kissed by all the rusticks present.

So, Ben Jonson, *Tale of a Tub*, A& IV. sc. vi:

“ Now are they tossing of his legs and arms,

“ Like *loggats* at a pear-tree.”

Again, in an old collection of Epigrams, Satires, &c.

“ To play at *loggats*, nine holes, or ten pinnes.”

Again, in Decker's *If this be not a good Play, the Devil is in it*, 1612:

“ — two hundred crowns!

“ I've lost as much at *loggats*.”

1. CLO. *A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,* [Sings
For—and a shrouding sheet :
O, a pit of clay for to be made
*For such a guest is meet.*³

[Throws up a scull.

HAM. There's another : Why may not that be
the scull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits⁴ now,
his quillets,⁵ his cases, his tenures, and his tricks?

It is one of the unlawful games enumerated in the statute of 33
of Henry VIII. STEEVENS.

Loggeting in the fields is mentioned for the first time among other
“ new and crafty games and plays,” in the statute of 33 Henry VIII.
c. 9. Not being mentioned in former acts against unlawful games,
it was probably not practised long before the statute of Henry the
Eighth was made. MALONE.

A *loggat-ground*, like a skittle-ground, is strewed with ashes, but
is more extensive. A bowl much larger than the jack of the game
of bowls is thrown first. The pins, which I believe are called
loggats, are much thinner, and lighter at one extremity than the
other. The bowl being first thrown, the players take the pins up
by the thinner and lighter end, and fling them towards the bowl,
and in such a manner that the pins may once turn round in the air,
and slide with the thinner extremity foremost towards the bowl. The
pins are about one or two-and-twenty inches long. BLOUNT.

³ *For such a guest is meet.*] Thus in the original:

A pick-axe and a spade,
And eke a shrowding sheet ;
A house of clay for to be made.
For such a guest most meet. STEEVENS.

⁴ — *quiddits &c.*] i. e. subtilties. So, in *Soliman and Perseda* :
“ I am wise, but *quiddits* will not answer death.”

STEEVENS.

Again, in Drayton's *Owle*, 4to, 1604 :

“ By some strange *quiddit*, or some wrested clause,
“ To find him guiltie of the breach of lawes.”

MALONE.

⁵ — *his quillets,*] So, in *Ram-Alley, or Merry-Tricks*, 1611 :
“ Nay, good Sir Throat, forbear your *quillits* now.”

STEEVENS.

Quillets are nice and frivolous distinctions. The word is rendered
by Coles in his Latin Dictionary, 1679, *res frivola*. MALONE.

why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce⁶ with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Humph! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes,⁷ his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers,⁸ his recoveries: Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries,⁹ to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more? ha?

HOR. Not a jot more, my lord.

⁶ — *the sconce* —] i. e. the head. So, in Lyly's *Mother Bombe*, 1594:

“Laudo ingenium; I like thy *sconce*.”

Again, in *Ram-Alley, or Merry Tricks*, 1611:

“— I say no more;

“But 'tis within this *sconce* to go beyond them.”

STEEVENS.

See Vol. X. p. 221, n. 3. MALONE.

⁷ — *his statutes*,] By a statute is here meant, not an act of parliament, but a species of security for money, affecting real property; whereby the lands of the debtor are conveyed to the creditor, till out of the rents and profits of them his debt may be satisfied. MALONE.

⁸ — *his double vouchers, &c.*] A recovery with *double voucher* is the one usually suffered, and is so denominated from *two* persons (the latter of whom is always the common cryer, or some such inferior person) being successively *vouched*, or called upon, to warrant the tenant's title. Both *fines* and *recoveries* are fictions of law, used to convert an estate tail into a fee simple. *Statutes* are (not acts of parliament, but) *statutes-merchant* and *staple*, particular modes of *recognizance* or acknowledgement for securing debts, which thereby become a charge upon the party's land. *Statutes* and *recognizances* are constantly mentioned together in the covenants of a purchase deed. RITSON.

⁹ *Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries,*] Omitted in the quartos. STEEVENS.

HAM. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

HOR. Ay, my lord, and of calves-skins too.

HAM. They are sheep, and calves, which seek out assurance in that.² I will speak to this fellow:—
Whose grave's this, firrah?

1. CLO. Mine, fir.—

O, a pit of clay for to be made [Sings.
For such a guest is meet.

HAM. I think it be thine, indeed; for thou liest in't.

1. CLO. You lie out on't, fir, and therefore it is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in't, yet it is mine.

HAM. Thou dost lie in't, to be in't, and say it is thine: 'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

1. CLO. 'Tis a quick lie, fir; 'twill away again, from me to you.

HAM. What man dost thou dig it for?

1. CLO. For no man, fir.

HAM. What woman then?

1. CLO. For none neither.

HAM. Who is to be buried in't?

1. CLO. One, that was a woman, fir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

HAM. How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card,³ or equivocation will undo us. By

² ———assurance in that.] A quibble is intended. Deeds, which are usually written on parchment, are called the common assurances of the kingdom. MALONE.

³ ———by the card,] The card is the paper on which the dis-

the lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked,⁴ that the

ferent points of the compass were described. *To do any thing by the card, is, to do it with nice observation.* JOHNSON.

The *card* is a *sea-chart*, still so termed by mariners: and the word is afterwards used by Ofrick in the same sense. Hamlet's meaning will therefore be, we must speak *directly forward in a straight line*, plainly to the point. RITSON.

So, in *Macbeth*:

“ And the very ports they blow, &c.

“ In the shipman's *card*.” STEEVENS.

—— *by the card,*] i. e. we must speak with the same precision and accuracy as is observed in marking the true distances of coasts, the heights, courses, &c. in a *sea-chart*, which in our poet's time was called a *card*. So, in *The Commonwealth and Government of Venice*, 4to. 1599, p. 177: “ Sebastian Munster in his *carde* of Venice —.” Again, in Bacon's *Essays*, p. 326, edit. 1740: “ Let him carry with him also some *card*, or book, describing the country where he travelleth.” In 1589 was published in 4to. *A briefe Discourse of Mappes and Cardes, and of their Uses*.—The “ shipman's *card*” in *Macbeth*, is the paper on which the different points of the compass are described. MALONE.

In every ancient *sea-chart* that I have seen, the compass, &c. was likewise introduced. STEEVENS.

⁴ —— *the age is grown so picked,*] So smart, so sharp, says Sir T. Hanmer, very properly; but there was, I think, about that time, a *picked shoe*, that is, a *shoe with a long pointed toe*, in fashion, to which the allusion seems likewise to be made. *Every man now is smart; and every man now is a man of fashion.* JOHNSON.

This fashion of wearing shoes with long pointed toes was carried to such excess in England, that it was restrained at last by proclamation so long ago as the fifth year of Edward IV. when it was ordered, “ that the beaks or pykes of shoes and boots should not pass two inches, upon pain of cursing by the clergy, and forfeiting twenty shillings, to be paid, one noble to the king, another to the cordwainers of London, and the third to the chamber of London;—and for other countries and towns the like order was taken.—Before this time, and since the year 1482, the pykes of shoes and boots were of such length, that they were fain to be tied up to the knee with chains of silver, and gilt, or at least filken laces.” STEEVENS.

—— *the age is grown so picked,*] i. e. so spruce, so quaint, so affected. See Vol. VII. p. 302, n. 2; and Vol. XI. p. 311, n. 9.

toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe.—How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

1. CLO. Of all the days i'the year, I came to't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

HAM. How long's that since?

1. CLO. Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: It was that very day that young Hamlet was born:⁵ he that is mad, and sent into England.

HAM. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

1. CLO. Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, 'tis no great matter there.

HAM. Why?

1. CLO. 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.⁶

There is, I think, no allusion to *picked* or pointed shoes, as has been supposed. *Picked* was a common word of Shakspeare's age, in the sense above given, and is found in Minshew's Dictionary, 1617, with its original signification: "*Trimm'd or drest sprucely.*" It is here used metaphorically. MALONE.

I should have concurred with Mr. Malone in giving a general sense to the epithet—*picked*, but for Hamlet's mention of the *toe* of the peasant, &c. STEEVENS.

⁵ — *that young Hamlet was born:*] By this scene it appears that Hamlet was then thirty years old, and knew Yorick well, who had been dead twenty-two years. And yet in the beginning of the play he is spoken of as a *very young* man, one that designed to go back to school, i. e. to the university of Wittenberg. The poet in the fifth act had forgot what he wrote in the first.

BLACKSTONE.

⁶ *'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.]*

" Nimirum insanus paucis videatur; eo quod

" Maxima pars hominum morbo jactatur eodem."

Horace. Sat. L. II. iii. 120. STEEVENS.

HAM. How came he mad ?

1. CLO. Very strangely, they say.

HAM. How strangely ?

1. CLO. 'Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

HAM. Upon what ground ?

1. CLO. Why, here in Denmark; I have been sexton here, man, and boy, thirty years.

HAM. How long will a man lie i'the earth ere he rot ?

1. CLO. 'Faith, if he be not rotten before he die, (as we have many pocky corfes now-a-days,⁷ that will scarce hold the laying in,) he will last you some eight year, or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

HAM. Why he more than another ?

1. CLO. Why, fir, his hide is so tann'd with his trade, that he will keep out water a great while; and your water is a fore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a scull now hath lain you i'the earth three-and-twenty years.

HAM. Whose was it ?

1. CLO. A whoreson mad fellow's it was; Whose do you think it was ?

HAM. Nay, I know not.

1. CLO. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! he pour'd a flaggon of Rhenish on my head once. This same scull, fir, was Yorick's scull,⁸ the king's jester.

HAM. This?

[Takes the scull.

⁷ ——— *now-a-days,*] Omitted in the quarto. MALONE.

⁸ ——— *Yorick's scull,*] Thus the folio.—The quarto reads—*Sir Yorick's scull.* MALONE.

1. CLO. E'en that.

HAM. Alas, poor Yorick!—I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorr'd in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips, that I have kiss'd I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning?⁹ quite chap-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber,² and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour³ she must come; make her laugh at that.—Pr'ythee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

HOR. What's that, my lord?

HAM. Dost thou think, Alexander look'd o'this fashion i'the earth?

HOR. E'en so.

HAM. And smelt so? pah!

[*Throws down the scull.*]

HOR. E'en so, my lord.

HAM. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

⁹ ——— *your own grinning?*] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads—*your own jeering*. In that copy, after this word, and *chap-fallen*, there is a note of interrogation, which all the editors have adopted. I doubt concerning its propriety. MALONE.

² ——— *my lady's chamber,*] Thus the folio. The quartos read—*my lady's table*, meaning, I suppose, her *dressings-table*.

STEEVENS.

³ ——— *to this favour—*] i. e. to this countenance or complexion. See Vol. VII. p. 16, n. 5; and Vol. XVIII. p. 33, n. 5. MALONE.

HOR. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

HAM. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: As thus; Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam: And why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Cæsar,⁴ dead, and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:

O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!⁵
But soft! but soft! aside;—Here comes the king,

Enter Priests, &c. in procession; the corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and Mourners following it; King, Queen, their Trains, &c.

The queen, the courtiers: Who is this they follow?

⁴ Imperious Cæsar,] Thus the quarto, 1604. The editor of the folio substituted *imperial*, not knowing that *imperious* was used in the same sense. See Vol. XVI. p. 391, n. 3; and Vol. XIX. p. 152, n. 2. There are other instances in the folio of a familiar term being substituted in the room of a more ancient word. See p. 314, n. 4. MALONE.

⁵ ———winter's flaw!] Winter's blast. JOHNSON.

So, in *Marius and Sylla*, 1594:

“ ———no doubt, this stormy flaw,

“ That Neptune sent to cast us on this shore.”

The quartos read—to expel the water's flaw. STEEVENS.

See Vol. XIV. p. 260, n. 9. A *flaw* meant a sudden gust of wind. So, in Florio's Italian Dictionary, 1598: “ Groppo, a *flaw*, or berrie of wind.” See also Cotgrave's Dictionary, 1611: “ *Lis de vent*, a gust or flaw of wind.” MALONE.

And with such maimed rites!⁶ This doth betoken,
The corse, they follow, did with desperate hand
Fordo its own life.⁷ 'Twas of some estate:⁸
Couch we a while, and mark.

[Retiring with HORATIO.]

LAER. What ceremony else?

HAM.

That is Laertes,

A very noble youth: Mark.

LAER. What ceremony else?

1. PRIEST.⁹ Her obsequies have been as far en-
larg'd

As we have warranty:² Her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'erflows the order,
She should in ground un sanctify'd have lodg'd
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards,³ flints, and pebbles, should be thrown on
her:

⁶ ——— maimed rites!] Imperfect obsequies: JOHNSON.

⁷ Fordo its own life.] To *fordo* is to undo, to destroy. So, in *Othello*:

" ——— this is the night

" That either makes me, or *fordo*es me quite."

Again, in *Acolastus*, a comedy, 1529: " ——— wolde to God it
might be lesful for me to *fordo* myself, or to make an ende of me!"

STEEVENS.

⁸ ——— some estate:] Some person of high rank. JOHNSON.

See Vol. XVI. p. 300, n. 4. MALONE.

⁹ 1. Priest.] This Priest in the old quarto is called Doctor.

STEEVENS.

² Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd

As we have warranty:] Is there any allusion here to the
coroner's warrant, directed to the minister and church-wardens of
a parish, and permitting the body of a person, who comes to an
untimely end, to receive christian burial? WHALLEY.

³ Shards,] i. e. broken pots or tiles, called *pot-sherds*, *tile-sherds*.
So, in *Job*, ii. 8: " And he took him a *potsherd*, (i. e. a piece of a
broken pot,) to scrape himself withal." RITSON.

Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,⁴
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.⁶

LAER. Must there no more be done?

1. PRIEST. No more be done!
We should profane the service of the dead,
To sing a *requiem*,⁶ and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

LAER. Lay her i'the earth —

⁴ — allow'd her virgin crants,] Evidently corrupted from *chants*, which is the true word. A *specific* rather than a *generic* term being here required to answer to *maiden strewments*.

WARBURTON.

— allow'd her virgin crants,] Thus the quarto, 1604. For this unusual word the editor of the first folio substituted *rites*. By a more attentive examination and comparison of the quarto copies and the folio, Dr. Johnson, I have no doubt, would have been convinced that this and many other changes in the folio were not made by Shakspeare, as is suggested in the following note.

MALONE.

I have been informed by an anonymous correspondent, that *crants* is the German word for *garlands*, and I suppose it was retained by us from the Saxons. To carry *garlands* before the bier of a maiden, and to hang them over her grave, is still the practice in rural parishes.

Crants therefore was the original word, which the author, discovering it to be provincial, and perhaps not understood, changed to a term more intelligible, but less proper. *Maiden rites* give no certain or definite image. He might have put *maiden wreaths*, or *maiden garlands*, but he perhaps bestowed no thought upon it; and neither genius nor practice will always supply a hasty writer with the most proper diction. JOHNSON.

In Minshew's Dictionary, see *Beades*, where *roosen krants* means *sertum rosarium*; and such is the name of a character in this play.

TOLLET.

⁶ Of bell and burial.] *Burial*, here signifies interment in consecrated ground. WARBURTON.

⁶ To sing a requiem.] A *requiem*, is a mass performed in Popish churches for the rest of the soul of a person deceased. The folio reads—sing *sage requiem*. STEEVENS.

And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring !⁷—I tell thee, churlish priest,
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.

HAM. What, the fair Ophelia !

QUEEN. Sweets to the sweet : Farewell !

[Scattering flowers.]

I hop'd, thou should'st have been my Hamlet's wife ;
I thought, thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet
maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave.

LAER.

O, treble woe

Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Depriv'd thee of !—Hold off the earth a while,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms :

[Leaps into the grave.]

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead ;
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,
To o'er-top old Pelion, or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.

HAM. *[Advancing.]* What is he, whose grief
Bears such an emphasis ? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers ? this is I,
Hamlet the Dane.

[Leaps into the grave.]

LAER.

The devil take thy soul !

[Grappling with him.]

HAM. Thou pray'st not well,
I pr'ythee, take thy fingers from my throat ;
For, though I am not splenetic and rash,

⁷ — from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring !] Thus, *Perfius*, Sat. I :
“ — e tumulo, fortunataque favilla,
“ Nascentur violæ ?” STEEVENS.

Yet have I in me something dangerous,
Which let thy wisdom fear: Hold off thy hand.

KING. Pluck them afunder.

QUEEN. Hamlet, Hamlet!

ALL.⁸ Gentlemen,——

HOR. Good my lord, be quiet.

[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.*]

HAM. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,

Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

QUEEN. O my son! what theme?

HAM. I lov'd Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love
Make up my sum.—What wilt thou do for her?

KING. O, he is mad, Laertes.

QUEEN. For love of God, forbear him.

HAM. 'Zounds, shew me what thou'lt do:
Woul't weep? woul't fight? woul't fast? woul't
tear thyself?

Woul't drink up Efil? eat a crocodile?⁹

* All. &c] This is restored from the quartos. STEEVENS.

⁹ *Woul't drink up Efil? eat a crocodile?*] This word has through all the editions been distinguished by Italick characters, as if it were the proper name of some river; and so, I dare say, all the editors have from time to time understood it to be. But then this must be some river in Denmark; and there is none there so called; nor is there any near it in name, that I know of but *Yffel*, from which the province of Overysfel derives its title in the German Flanders. Besides, Hamlet is not proposing any impossibilities to Laertes, as the drinking up a river would be: but he rather seems to mean,—Wilt thou resolve to do things the most shocking and distasteful to human nature; and, behold, I am as resolute. I am persuaded the poet wrote:

Wilt drink up Eifel? eat a crocodile?

i. e. Wilt thou swallow down large draughts of vinegar? The

I'll do't.—Dost thou come here to whine?
To outface me with leaping in her grave?

proposition, indeed, is not very grand: but the doing it might be as distasteful and unfavoury as eating the flesh of a *crocodile*. And now there is neither an impossibility, nor an anticlimax: and the lowness of the idea is in some measure removed by the uncommon term. THEOBALD.

Sir T. Hamner has,

Wilt drink up Nile? or eat a crocodile?

Hamlet certainly meant (for he says he will rant) to dare Laertes to attempt any thing, however difficult or unnatural; and might safely promise to follow the example his antagonist was to set, in draining the channel of a river, or trying his teeth on an animal whose scales are supposed to be impenetrable. Had Shakspeare meant to make Hamlet say—*Wilt thou drink vinegar?* he probably would not have used the term *drink up*; which means, *totally to exhaust*; neither is that challenge very magnificent, which only provokes an adversary to hazard a fit of the heart-burn or the colick.

The commentator's *Yffel* would serve Hamlet's turn or mine. This river is twice mentioned by Stowe, p. 735: "It standeth a good distance from the river *Iffell*, but hath a sponce on *Iffel* of incredible strength."

Again, by Drayton, in the 24th Song of his *Polyolbion*:

"The one o'er *Ifell's* banks the ancient Saxons taught;

"At *Over-Ifell* rests, the other did apply:—."

And in *King Richard II.* a thought, in part the same, occurs, A & II. sc. ii:

"—— the task he undertakes

"Is numb'ring sands, and *drinking oceans dry*."

But in an old Latin account of Denmark and the neighbouring provinces, I find the names of several rivers little differing from *Efil*, or *Eifill*, in spelling or pronunciation. Such are the *Essa*, the *Oefil*, and some others. The word, like many more, may indeed be irrecoverably corrupted; but, I must add, that few authors later than Chaucer or Skelton make use of *eyfel* for *vinegar*: nor has Shakspeare employed it in any other of his plays. The poet might have written the *Weifel*, a considerable river which falls into the Baltic ocean, and could not be unknown to any prince of Denmark. STEEVENS.

Woul't is a contraction of *wouldest*, [wouldest thou] and perhaps ought rather to be written *would'st*. The quarto, 1604, has *efil*. In the folio the word is spelt *efile*. *Eifil* or *eifel* is vinegar. The

Be buried quick with her, and so will I:
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw

word is used by Chaucer, and Skelton, and by Sir Thomas More,
Works, p. 21. edit. 1557 :

" — with fowre pocion
" If thou paine thy tast, remember therewithal
" How Christ for thee tasted *eysil* and gall."

The word is also found in Minshew's Dictionary, 1617, and in
Coles' Latin Dictionary, 1679.

Our poet, as Dr. Farmer has observed, has again employed the
same word in his 111th Sonnet:

" — like a willing patient I will drink
" Potions of *eyfell* 'gainst my strong infection;
" No *bitterness* that I will bitter think,
" Nor double penance, to correct correction."

Mr. Steevens supposes, that a river was meant, either the *Rffel*,
or *Oefil*, or *Weifel*, a considerable river which falls into the Baltick
ocean. The words, *drink up*, he considers as favourable to his
notion. " Had Shakspeare, (he observes,) meant to make Hamlet
say, *Wilt thou drink vinegar?* he probably would not have used the
term *drink up*, which means, *totally to exhaust*. In *King Richard II.*
A& II. sc. ii. (he adds) a thought in part the same occurs:

" — the task he undertakes,
" Is numb'ring sands, and *drinking oceans dry*."

But I must remark, in that passage evidently *impossibilities* are pointed
out. Hamlet is only talking of difficult or painful exertions.
Every man can weep, fight, fast, tear himself, drink a potion of
vinegar, and eat a piece of a dissected crocodile, however disagree-
able; for I have no doubt that the poet uses the words *eat a cro-*
codile, for *eat of a crocodile*. We yet use the same phraseology in
familiar language.

On the phrase *drink up* no stress can be laid, for our poet has
employed the same expression in his 114th Sonnet, without any
idea of *entirely exhausting*, and merely as synonymous to *drink*:

" Or whether doth my mind, being crown'd with you,
" *Drink up* the monarch's plague, this flattery?"

Again, in the same Sonnet:

" — 'tis flattery in my seeing,
" And my great mind most kingly *drinks it up*.

Again, in *Timon of Athens*:

" And how his silence *drinks up* his applause."

In Shakspeare's time, as at present, to *drink up*, often meant no
more than simply to drink. So, in Florio's Italian Did. 1598:
" *Sorbire*, to sip or *sup up* any drink." In like manner we some-

Millions of acres on us ; till our ground,
 Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
 Make Ossa like a wart ! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,
 I'll rant as well as thou.

QUEEN. This is mere madness:²
 And thus awhile the fit will work on him ;
 Anon, as patient as the female dove,
 When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,³
 His silence will sit drooping.

times say, "when you have swallow'd down this potion," though we mean no more than—"when you have swallow'd this potion."

MALONE.

Mr. Malone's strictures are undoubtedly acute, and though not, in my own opinion, decisive, may still be just. Yet as I cannot reconcile myself to the idea of a prince's challenging a nobleman to drink what Mrs. Quickly has called "a mess of vinegar," I have neither changed our former text, nor withdrawn my original remarks on it, notwithstanding they are almost recapitulated in those of my opponent.—On the score of such redundancy, however, I both need and solicit the indulgence of the reader. STEEVENS.

² *This is mere madness:* This speech in the first folio is given to the king. MALONE.

³ *When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,*] To *disclose* was anciently used for to *hatch*. So, in *The Booke of Huntyng, Hawk-ying, Fyshyng, &c.* bl. l. no date: "First they ben eges ; and after they ben *disclosed*, haukes ; and commonly goshaukes ben *disclosed* as sone as the choughes." To *exclude* is the technical term at present. During three days after the pigeon has *hatched* her couplets, (for she lays no more than *two* eggs,) she never quits her nest, except for a few moments in quest of a little food for herself ; as all her young require in that early state, is to be kept warm, an office which she never entrusts to the male. STEEVENS.

The young nestlings of the pigeon, when first disclosed, are callow, only covered with a yellow down : and for that reason stand in need of being cherished by the warmth of the hen, to protect them from the chillness of the ambient air, for a considerable time after they are hatched. HEATH.

The word *disclose* has already occurred in a sense nearly allied to *hatch*, in this play :

"And I do doubt, the hatch and the *disclose*

"Will be some danger." MALONE.

HAM. Hear you, fir;
 What is the reason that you use me thus?
 I lov'd you ever: But it is no matter;
 Let Hercules himself do what he may,
 The cat will mew, and dog will have his day. [Exit.

KING. I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon
 him.— [Exit HORATIO.
 Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;
 [To LAERTES.

We'll put the matter to the present push.—
 Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.—
 This grave shall have a living monument:
 An hour of quiet shortly⁴ shall we see;
 Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [Exeunt.

S C E N E II.

A Hall in the Castle.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

HAM. So much for this, fir: now shall you see
 the other;—
 You do remember all the circumstance?
 HOR. Remember it, my lord!
 HAM. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fight-
 ing,
 That would not let me sleep!⁵ methought, I lay

⁴ — *shortly* —] The first quarto erroneously reads — *thirty*.
 The second and third — *thereby*. The folio — *shortly*. STEEVENS.

⁵ Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
That would not let me sleep; &c.] So, in *Troilus and Cressida*:
 “ Within my soul there doth commence a fight,
 “ Of this strange nature,” &c.

Worse than the mutines in the bilboes.⁶ Rashly,

The Hystorie of Hamblet, bl. let. furnished our author with the scheme of sending the prince to England, and with most of the circumstances described in this scene:

[After the death of Polonius] “Fengon [the king in the present play] could not content himselfe, but still his mind gave him that the foole [Hamlet] would play him some trick of legerdemaine. And in that conceit, seeking to bee rid of him, determined to find the meanes to doe it by the aid of a stranger, making the king of England minister of his massacrous resolution; to whom he purposed to send him, and by letters desire him to put him to death.

“Now to beare him company, were assigned two of Fengon’s faithful ministers, bearing letters ingraved in wood, that contained Hamlet’s death, in such sort as he had advertised the king of England. But the subtil Danish prince, (being at sea,) whilst his companions slept, having read the letters, and knowing his uncle’s great treason, with the wicked and villainous mindes of the two courtiers that led him to the slaughter, rased out the letters that concerned his death, and instead thereof graved others, with commission to the king of England to hang his two companions; and not content to turn the death they had devised against him, upon their own neckes, wrote further, that king Fengon willed him to give his daughter to Hamblet in marriage.” *Hyst. of Hamblet*, signat. G. 2.

From this narrative it appears that the faithful ministers of Fengon were not unacquainted with the import of the letters they bore. Shakspeare, who has followed the story pretty closely, probably meant to describe their representatives, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as equally guilty; as confederating with the king to deprive Hamlet of his life. So that his procuring their execution, though certainly not absolutely necessary to his own safety, does not appear to have been a wanton and unprovoked cruelty, as Mr. Steevens has supposed in his very ingenious observations on the general character and conduct of the prince throughout this piece.

In the conclusion of his drama the poet has entirely deviated from the fabulous history, which in other places he has frequently followed.

After Hamblet’s arrival in England, (for no sea-fight is mentioned,) “the king, (says *The Hystory of Hamblet*) admiring the young prince,—gave him his daughter in marriage, according to the counterfeit letters by him devised; and the next day caused the two servants of Fengon to be executed, to satisfy, as he thought, the king’s desire.” *Hyst. of Hamb.* Ibid.

And prais'd be rashness for it,—Let us know,

Hamlet, however, returned to Denmark, without marrying the king of England's daughter, who, it should seem, had only been *betrothed* to him. When he arrived in his native country, he made the courtiers drunk, and having burnt them to death, by setting fire to the banqueting-room wherein they sat, he went into Fongon's chamber, and killed him, “giving him (says the relater) such a violent blowe upon the chine of the neck, that he cut his head clean from the shoulders.” *Ibid.* signat. F. 3.

He is afterwards said to have been crowned king of Denmark.

MALONE.

I apprehend that a critick and a juryman are bound to form their opinions on what they see and hear in the cause before them, and not to be influenced by extraneous particulars unsupported by legal evidence in open court. I persist in observing that from Shakspeare's drama no proofs of the guilt of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern can be collected. They may be convicted by the black letter history; but if the tragedy forbears to criminate, it has no right to sentence them. This is sufficient for the commentator's purpose. It is not his office to interpret the plays of Shakspeare according to the novels on which they are founded, novels which the poet sometimes followed, but as often materially deserted. Perhaps he never confined himself strictly to the plan of any one of his originals. His negligence of poetick justice is notorious; nor can we expect that he who was content to sacrifice the pious Ophelia, should have been more scrupulous about the worthless lives of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Therefore, I still assert that, in the tragedy before us, their deaths appear both wanton and unprovoked; and the critick, like Bayes, must have recourse to somewhat long before the beginning of this play, to justify the conduct of its hero. STEEVENS.

⁶ ——— mutines in the bilboes.] *Mutines*, the French word for seditious or disobedient fellows in the army or fleet. *Bilboes*, the ship's prison. JOHNSON.

To *mutine* was formerly used for to *mutiny*. See p. 229, n. 5. So, *mutine*, for *mutiner*, or *mutineer*: “un homme *mutin*,” Fr. a mutinous or seditious person. In *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, a tragedy, 1587, the adjective is used:

“Suppresseth *mutin* force, and practicke fraud.”

MALONE.

The *bilboes* is a bar of iron with fetters annexed to it, by which mutinous or disorderly sailors were anciently linked together. The

Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When ⁷ our deep plots do pall: ⁸ and that should
teach us,

word is derived from *Bilboa*, a place in Spain where instruments of steel were fabricated in the utmost perfection. To understand Shakspeare's allusion completely, it should be known, that as these fetters connect the legs of the offenders very close together, their attempts to rest must be as fruitless as those of Hamlet, in whose mind *there was a kind of fighting that would not let him sleep*. Every motion of one must disturb his partner in confinement. The *bilboes* are still shown in the Tower of London, among the other spoils of the Spanish Armada. The following is the figure of them:



STEEVENS.

⁷ ———— *Rashly,*

And prais'd be rashness for it,—Let us know,

Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,

When &c.] Hamlet, delivering an account of his escape, begins

with saying — That he *rashly*——and then is carried into a reflection upon the weakness of human wisdom. I *rashly*——praised be rashness for it——*Let us not think these events casual, but let us know*, that is, *take notice and remember*, that we sometimes succeed by *indiscretion*, when we fail by *deep plots*, and infer the perpetual superintendence and agency of the Divinity. The observation is just, and will be allowed by every human being who shall reflect on the course of his own life. JOHNSON.

This passage, I think, should be thus distributed:

————— *Rashly*

(And prais'd be rashness, for it lets us know,

Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,

When our deep plots do fail; and that should teach us,

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,

Rough-hew them how we will;—

Hor. That is most certain.)

Ham. Up from my cabin, &c.

So that *rashly* may be joined in construction with — *in the dark grop'd I to find out them.* TYRWHITT.

⁸ *When our deep plots do pall:]* Thus the first quarto, 1604.

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.⁹

HOR.

That is most certain.

HAM. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Grop'd I to find out them: had my desire;
Finger'd their packet; and, in fine, withdrew
To mine own room again: making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,
A royal knavery; an exact command,—
Larded with many several sorts of reasons,²
Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,

The editor of the next quarto, for *pall*, substituted *fall*. The folio reads,—

When our dear plots do paule.

Mr. Pope and the subsequent editors read,—

When our deep plots do fail:—

but *pall* and *fail* are by no means likely to have been confounded. I have therefore adhered to the old copies. In *Antony and Cleopatra* our poet has used the participle:

“ I'll never follow thy *pall'd* fortunes more.” MALONE.

⁹ *There's a divinity that shapes our ends,*

Rough-hew them how we will.] Dr. Farmer informs me, that these words are merely technical. A wool-man, butcher, and dealer in *skewers*, lately observed to him that his nephew, (an idle lad) could only *assist* him in making them; “ — he could *rough-hew* them, but I was obliged to *shape their ends*.” Whoever recollects the profession of Shakspeare's father, will admit that his son might be no stranger to such a term. I have frequently seen packages of wool pin'd up with *skewers*. STEEVENS.

² *Larded with many several sorts of reasons,*] I am afraid here is a very poor conceit, founded on an equivoque between *reasons* and *raisins*, which in Shakspeare's time were undoubtedly pronounced alike. *Sorts of raisins, sugars, &c.* is the common phraseology of shops.—We have the same quibble in another play. MALONE.

I suspect no quibble or conceit in these words of Hamlet. In one of Ophelia's songs a similar phrase has already occurred: “ *Larded all with sweet flowers*.” To *lard* any thing with *raisins*, however, was a practice unknown to ancient cookery. STEEVENS.

With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,³—
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,⁴
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.

HOR. Is't possible?

HAM. Here's the commission; read it at more
leisure.

But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

HOR. Ay, 'beseech you.

HAM. Being thus benetted round with villanies,
Or I could make⁵ a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play;⁶—I fat me down;

³ *With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,]* With such causes of terror, rising from my character and designs. JOHNSON.

A bug was no less a terriffick being than a goblin. So, in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, Book II. c. iii:

"As ghastly bug their haire an end does reare."

We call it at present a *bugbear*. STEEVENS.

See Vol. XV. p. 170, n. 7. MALONE.

⁴ ——— *no leisure bated,]* Bated, for allowed. To *abate*, signifies to *deduct*; this deduction, when applied to the person in whose favour it is made, is called an *allowance*. Hence he takes the liberty of using *bated* for *allowed*. WARBURTON.

No leisure bated—means, without any *abatement* or intermission of time. MALONE.

⁵ Or *I could make*—] Or in old English signified *before*. See Vol. XI. p. 432, n. 3. MALONE.

⁶ *Being thus benetted round with villanies,
Or I could make a prologue to my brains,*

They had begun the play;] Hamlet is telling how luckily every thing fell out; he groped out their commission in the dark without waking them; he found himself doomed to immediate destruction. Something was to be done for his preservation. An expedient occurred, not produced by the comparison of one method with another, or by a regular deduction of consequences, but before he could make a prologue to his brains, they had begun the play. Before he could summon his faculties, and propose to himself what should be done, a complete scheme of action presented itself to him. His mind operated before he had excited it. This appears to me to be the meaning. JOHNSON.

Devis'd a new commission; wrote it fair:
 I once did hold it, as our statists do,⁵
 A baseness to write fair,⁶ and labour'd much
 How to forget that learning; but, fir, now
 It did me yeoman's service:⁷ Wilt thou know
 The effect of what I wrote?

HOR.

Ay, good my lord.

HAM. An earnest conjuration from the king,—
 As England was his faithful tributary;
 As love between them like the palm might flourish;⁸
 As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,
 And stand a comma 'tween their amities;⁹

⁵ — as our statists do,] A *statist* is a *statesman*. So, in Shirley's *Humorous Courtier*, 1640:

" — that he is wise, a *statist*."

Again, in Ben Jonson's *Magnetick Lady*:

" Will screw you out a secret from a *statist*." STEEVENS.

Most of the great men of Shakspeare's times, whose autographs have been preserved, wrote very bad hands; their secretaries very neat ones. BLACKSTONE.

⁶ I once did hold it, as our statists do,

A *baseness* to write fair,] " I have in my time, (says Montaigne,) scene some, who by writing did earnestly get both their titles and living, to disavow their apprenticeship, marre their pen, and aff. & the ignorance of *so vulgar a qualitie*." Florio's translation, 1603, p. 125. RITSON.

⁷ — yeoman's service:] The meaning, I believe, is, *This yeomanly qualification was a most useful servant, or yeoman, to me; i. e. did me eminent service.* The ancient yeomen were famous for their military valour. " These were the good archers in times past, (says Sir Thomas Smith,) and the stable troop of footmen that affraide all France." STEEVENS.

⁸ — like the palm might flourish;] This comparison is scriptural. " The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree." *Psalms*, xcii. 11. STEEVENS.

⁹ As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,
 And stand a comma 'tween their amities;] The expression of our author is, like many of his phrases, sufficiently constrained and affected, but it is not incapable of explanation. The *comma* is the

And many such like as's of great charge,²—
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
Without debatement further, more, or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not thriving-time allow'd.³

note of *connection* and continuity of sentences; the *period* is the note of *abruption* and disjunction. Shakspeare had it perhaps in his mind to write,—That unless England complied with the mandate, *we* should put a period to their amity; he altered his mode of diction, and thought that, in an opposite sense, he might put, that *peace* should stand a comma between their amities. This is not an easy stile; but is it not the stile of Shakspeare? JOHNSON.

² — as's of great charge,] *Asses* heavily loaded. A quibble is intended between *as* the conditional particle, and *ass* the beast of burthen. That *charg'd* anciently signified *loaded*, may be proved from the following passage in *The Widow's Tears*, by Chapman, 1612:

“Thou must be the *ass* charg'd with crowns to make way.”
JOHNSON.

Shakspeare has so many quibbles of his own to answer for, that there are those who think it hard he should be charged with others which perhaps he never thought of. STEEVENS.

Though the first and obvious meaning of these words certainly is, “many similar adjurations, or monitory injunctions, of great weight and importance,” yet Dr. Johnson's notion of a quibble being also in the poet's thoughts, is supported by two other passages of Shakspeare, in which *asses* are introduced as usually employed in the carriage of gold, a charge of no small weight:

“He shall but bear them, as the *ass* bears gold,
“To groan and sweat under the business.”

Julius Cæsar.

Again, in *Measure for Measure*:

“—like an *ass*, whose back with ingots bows,
“Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
“And death unloads thee.”

In further support of his observation, it should be remembered, that the letter *s* in the particle *as* is in the midland counties usually pronounced hard, as in the pronoun *us*. Dr. Johnson himself always pronounced the particle *as* hard, and so I have no doubt did Shakspeare. It is so pronounced in Warwickshire at this day. The first folio accordingly has—*assis*. MALONE.

³ *Not thriving-time allow'd.*] i. e. without time for confession of

HOR. How was this seal'd?

HAM. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant;
I had my father's signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal:³
Folded the writ up in form of the other;
Subscrib'd it; gave't the impresson; plac'd it safely,
The changeling never known:⁴ Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already.

HOR. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

HAM. Why, man,⁵ they did make love to this
employment;

They are not near my conscience; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow:⁶

'Tis dangerous, when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.

HOR. Why, what a king is this!

HAM. Does it not, think thee,⁷ stand me now
upon?

He that hath kill'd my king, and whor'd my mother;
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes;

their sins: another proof of Hamlet's christian-like disposition.
See Vol. XXI. p. 190, n. 5. STEEVENS.

³ ——— *the model of that Danish seal:*] The model is in old language the copy. The signet was formed in imitation of the Danish seal. See Vol. XII. p. 93, n. 5. MALONE.

⁴ *The changeling never known:*] A changeling is a child which the fairies are supposed to leave in the room of that which they steal. JOHNSON.

⁵ *Why, man, &c.*] This line is omitted in the quartos.

STEEVENS.

⁶ ——— *by their own insinuation—*] *Insinuation*, for corruptly obtruding themselves into his service. WARBURTON.

By their having insinuated or thrust themselves into the employment. MALONE.

⁷ ——— *think thee,*] i. e. bethink thee. MALONE.

Thrown out his angle⁸ for my proper life,
And with such cozenage; is't not perfect conscience,
To quit him⁹ with this arm? and is't not to be
damn'd,

To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil?

HOR. It must be shortly known to him from
England,

What is the issue of the business there.

HAM. It will be short: the interim is mine;
And a man's life's no more than to say, one.
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself;
For by the image of my cause, I see
The portraiture of his: I'll count his favours:²
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion.

HOR. Peace; who comes here?

⁸ *Thrown out his angle*—] An *angle* in Shakspeare's time signified a fishing-rod. So, in Lyly's *Sapho and Phao*, 1591:

“*Phao*. But he may bless fishing, that caught such a one in the sea.

“*Venus*. It was not with an *angle*, my boy, but with a net.”
MALONE.

⁹ *To quit him*—] To requite him; to pay him his due. JOHNSON.

This passage, as well as the three following speeches, is not in the quartos. STEEVENS.

² ——— *I'll count his favours*:] Thus the folio. Mr. Rowe first made the alteration, which is perhaps unnecessary. *I'll count his favours* may mean, — *I will make account of them*, i. e. *reckon upon them, value them*. STEEVENS.

What favours has Hamlet received from Laertes, that he was to make account of? — I have no doubt but we should read,

—— *I'll court his favour*. M. MASON.

Mr. Rowe for *count* very plausibly reads *court*. MALONE.

Hamlet may refer to former civilities of Laertes, and weigh them against his late intemperance of behaviour; or may *count* on such kindness as he expected to receive in consequence of a meditated reconciliation. STEEVENS.

Enter OSRICK.

OSR. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

HAM. I humbly thank you, sir. — Dost know this water-fly? ³

HOR. No, my good lord.

HAM. Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice to know him: He hath much land, and fertile: let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess: 'Tis a chough; ⁴ but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

OSR. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

HAM. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit: Your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

OSR. I thank your lordship, 'tis very hot.

HAM. No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

OSR. It is indifferent cold, my lord indeed.

³ — Dost know this water-fly?] A water-fly skips up and down upon the surface of the water, without any apparent purpose or reason, and is thence the proper emblem of a busy trifler.

JOHNSON.

Water-fly is in *Troilus and Cressida* used as a term of reproach, for contemptible from smallness of size. "How (says Therites) the poor world is pestered with such water-flies; diminutives of nature." Water-flies are guats. This insect in Chaucer denotes a thing of no value. *Canterbury Tales*, v. 17203, Mr. Tyrwhitt's edition:

"Not worth to thee as in comparison

"The mountance [value] of a gnat." HOLT WHITE.

⁴ — 'Tis a chough;] A kind of jackdaw. JOHNSON.

See Vol. XII. p. 244, n. 7. STEEVENS.

HAM. But yet, methinks, it is very sultry and hot;⁵
or my complexion⁶ —

OSR. Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry,⁷ —
as 'twere, — I cannot tell how. — My lord, his ma-
jesty bade me signify to you, that he has laid a great
wager on your head: Sir, this is the matter, —

HAM. I beseech you, remember⁸ —

[HAMLET moves him to put on his hat.

OSR. Nay, good my lord; for my ease, in good
faith.⁹ Sir,² here is newly come to court, Laertes:

⁵ *But yet, methinks, it is very sultry &c.]* Hamlet is here playing
over the same farce with Osrick, which he had formerly done with
Polonius. STEEVENS.

⁶ — or my complexion —] The folios read — *for my com-
plexion.* STEEVENS.

⁷ *Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry,]*

“ — igniculum brumæ si tempore poscas,

“ Accipit endromidem; si dixeris æstuo, sudat.” *Juv.*

MALONE.

⁸ *I beseech you, remember]* “Remember not your courtesy,” I be-
lieve, Hamlet would have said, if he had not been interrupted.
“Remember thy courtesy,” he could not possibly have said, and
therefore this abrupt sentence may serve to confirm an emendation
which I proposed in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Vol. VII. p. 308, n. 6,
where Armado says, — “I do beseech thee, remember thy courtesy; —
I beseech thee, apparel thy head.” I have no doubt that Shak-
speare there wrote, “ — remember not thy courtesy,” — and that
the negative was omitted by the negligence of the compositor.

MALONE.

⁹ *Nay, good my lord; for my ease, in good faith.]* This seems
to have been the affected phrase of the time. Thus, in Marston's
Malcontent, 1604: “I beseech you, sir, be covered — No, in good
faith for my ease.” And in other places. FARMER.

It appears to have been the common language of ceremony in our
author's time. “Why do you stand *bareheaded*?” (says one of the
speakers in Florio's *SECOND FRUTES*, 1591) you do yourself wrong.
Pardon me good sir, (replies his friend;) I do it *for my ease*.”

Again, in *A New Way to pay old Debts*, by Massinger, 1633;

“ — Is't for your ease

“ You keep your hat off?” MALONE.

believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences,³ of very soft society, and great showing: Indeed, to speak feelingly⁴ of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry,⁵ for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.⁶

HAM. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you;⁷—though, I know, to divide him inventorially, would dizzy the arithmetick of memory; and yet but raw neither,⁸ in respect of his quick fail. But,

² *Sir, &c.]* The folio omits this and the following fourteen speeches; and in their place substitutes only, “Sir, you are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is at his weapon.”

STEEVENS.

³ ——— *full of most excellent differences,]* Full of distinguishing excellencies. JOHNSON.

⁴ ——— *speak feelingly—]* The first quarto reads, —*sellingly*. So in another of our author’s plays:

“To things of sale a seller’s praise belongs.” STEEVENS.

⁵ ——— *the card or calendar of gentry,]* The general preceptor of elegance; the *card* by which a gentleman is to direct his course; the *calendar* by which he is to choose his time, that what he does may be both excellent and seasonable. JOHNSON.

⁶ ——— *for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.]* You shall find him containing and comprising every quality which a gentleman would desire to contemplate for imitation. I know not but it should be read, *You shall find him the continent*. JOHNSON.

⁷ *Sir, his definement &c.]* This is designed as a specimen, and ridicule of the court jargon amongst the *precieux* of that time. The sense in English is, “Sir, he suffers nothing in your account of him, though to enumerate his good qualities particularly would be endless; yet when we had done our best, it would still come short of him. However, in strictness of truth, he is a great genius, and of a character so rarely to be met with, that to find any thing like him we must look into his mirror, and his imitators will appear no more than his shadows.” WARBURTON.

⁸ ——— *and yet but raw neither,]* We should read — *slow*.

WARBURTON.

I believe *raw* to be the right word; it is a word of great latitude; *raw* signifies *unripe, immature, thence unformed, imperfect, unskilful*.

in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article;⁹ and his infusion of such dearth² and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror; and, who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

OSR. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

HAM. The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

OSR. Sir?

HOR. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do't, sir, really.³

The best account of him would be *imperfect*, in respect of his quick sail. The phrase *quick sail* was, I suppose, a proverbial term for *activity of mind*. JOHNSON.

⁹ — *a soul of great article*;] This is obscure. I once thought it might have been, *a soul of great altitude*; but, I suppose, *a soul of great article*, means *a soul of large comprehension*, of many contents; the particulars of an inventory are called *articles*.

JOHNSON.

² — *of such dearth* —] *Dearth* is *deariness*, value, price. And his internal qualities of such value and rarity. JOHNSON.

³ *Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do't, sir, really.*] Of this interrogatory remark the sense is very obscure. The question may mean, *Might not all this be understood in plainer language*. But then, *you will do it, sir, really*, seems to have no use, for who could doubt but plain language would be intelligible? I would therefore read, *Is't possible not to be understood in a mother tongue? You will do it, sir, really*. JOHNSON.

Suppose we were to point the passage thus: "Is't not possible to understand? In another tongue you will do it, sir, really."

The speech seems to be addressed to *Osrick*, who is puzzled by Hamlet's imitation of his own affected language. STEEVENS.

Theobald has silently substituted *rarely* for *really*. I think Horatio's speech is addressed to Hamlet. *Another tongue* does not mean as I conceive, *plainer language*, (as Dr. Johnson supposed,) but "language so fantastical and affected as to have the appearance of a foreign tongue:" and in the following words Horatio, I think,

HAM. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

OSR. Of Laertes?

HOR. His purse is empty already; all his golden words are spent.

HAM. Of him, sir.

OSR. I know, you are not ignorant —

HAM. I would, you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me; ⁴ — Well, sir.

OSR. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is —

HAM. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; ⁵ but, to know a man well, were to know himself.

OSR. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed ⁶ he's unfellow'd.

HAM. What's his weapon?

OSR. Rapier and dagger.

means to praise Hamlet for imitating this kind of babble so happily! I suspect, however, that the poet wrote — *Is't possible not to understand in a mother tongue?*

Since this note was written, I have found the very same error in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, 4to. 1605, B. II. p. 60: "— the art of grammar, whereof the use in *another* tongue is small, in a *foreine* tongue more." The author in his table of Errata says, it should have been printed — *in mother tongue*. MALONE.

⁴ — *if you did, it would not much approve me;*] If you knew I was not ignorant, your esteem would not much advance my reputation. To approve, is to recommend to approbation. JOHNSON.

⁵ *I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him &c.]* I dare not pretend to know him, lest I should pretend to an equality: no man can completely know another, but by knowing himself, which is the utmost extent of human wisdom. JOHNSON.

⁶ — *in his meed* —] In his excellence. JOHNSON.

See Vol. XV. p. 160, n. 2. MALONE.

HAM. That's two of his weapons : but, well.

OSR. The king, sir, hath wager'd with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has impawn'd,⁷ as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers,⁸ and so:⁹ Three of

⁷ ——— *impawn'd*,] Thus the quarto, 1604. The folio reads — *impon'd*. *Pignare* in Italian signifies both to *pawn*, and to lay a wager. MALONE.

Perhaps it should be, *depon'd*. So, *Hudibras*:

“ I would upon this cause *depone*,

“ As much as any I have known.”

But perhaps *imponed* is pledged, *impawned*, so spelt to ridicule the affectation of uttering English words with French pronunciation.

JOHNSON.

To *impose* is certainly right, and means to put down, to flake, from the verb *impono*. RITSON.

⁸ ——— *hangers*,] Under this term were comprehended four graduated straps, &c. that hung down in a belt on each side of its receptacle for the sword. I write this, with a most gorgeous belt, at least as ancient as the time of James I. before me. It is of crimson velvet embroidered with gold, and had belonged to the Somerset family.

In Massinger's *Fatal Dowry*, Liladam, (who when arrested as a gentleman, avows himself to have been a tailor,) says

“ ——— This rich sword

“ Grew suddenly out of a tailor's bodkin ;

“ These *hangers* from my vails and fees in hell : ” &c.

i. e. the tailor's *hell*; the place into which shreds and remnants are thrown.

Again, in *The Birth of Merlin*, 1662 :

“ He has a fair sword, but his *hangers* are fallen.”

Again, in *Rhodon and Iris*, 1631 :

“ ——— a rapier

“ Hatch'd with gold, with hilt and *hangers* of the new fashion.” STEEVENS.

The word *hangers* has been misunderstood. That part of the girdle or belt by which the sword was suspended, was in our poet's time called *the hangers*. See Minsheu's Dictionary, 1617: “ The *hangors* of a sword. G. *Pendants d'espée*, L. *Subcingulum*,” &c. So, in an Inventory found among the papers of Hamlet Clarke, an attorney of a court of record in London in the year 1611, and printed in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. LVIII. p. 111 :

the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

HAM. What call you the carriages?

HOR. I knew, you must be edified by the margin,² ere you had done.

OSR. The carriages, fir, are the hangers.

HAM. The phrase would be more german³ to the matter, if we could carry a cannon by our sides; I would, it might be hangers till then. But, on: Six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish: Why is this impawn'd, as you call it?

OSR. The king, fir, hath lay'd,⁴ that in a dozen

"Item, One payre of girdle and hangers, of silver purle, and cullored filke.

"Item, One payre of girdler and hangers upon white fattene."

The hangers ran in an oblique direction from the middle of the forepart of the girdle across the left thigh, and were attached to the girdle behind. MALONE.

² ——— you must be edified by the margin,] Dr. Warburton very properly observes, that in the old books the gloss or comment was usually printed on the margin of the leaf. So, in Decker's *Honest Whore*, Part II. 1630:

" ——— I read

"Strange comments in those margins of our looks."

Again, in *The Contention betwyxte Churchyard and Camell*, &c. 1560:

"A solempne proceffe at a blushe

"He quoted here and there,

"With matter in the margin set" &c.

This speech is omitted in the folio. STEEVENS:

³ ——— more german —] More *a-kin*. JOHNSON.

So, in *The Winter's Tale*: "Those that are german to him, though removed fifty times, shall come under the hangman."

STEEVENS.

⁴ The king, fir, hath lay'd,] This wager I do not understand,

passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits; he hath laid, on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

HAM. How, if I answer, no?

OSR. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

HAM. Sir, I will walk here in the hall: If it please his majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me: let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him, if I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame, and the odd hits.

OSR. Shall I deliver you so?

HAM. To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

OSR. I commend my duty to your lordship.

[Exit.

HAM. Yours, yours.—He does well, to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

In a dozen passes one must exceed the other more or less than three hits. Nor can I comprehend, how, in a dozen, there can be twelve to nine. The passage is of no importance; it is sufficient that there was a wager. The quarto has the passage as it stands. The folio,—*He hath one twelve for mine.* JOHNSON.

As three or four complete pages would scarcely hold the remarks already printed, together with those which have lately been communicated to me in MSS. on this very unimportant passage, I shall avoid both partiality and tediousness, by the omission of them all.—I therefore leave the conditions of this wager to be adjusted by the members of Brookes's, or the Jockey-Club at Newmarket, who on such subjects may prove the most enlightened commentators, and most successfully bestir themselves in the cold unpoetick dabble of calculation. STEEVENS:

HOR. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.⁵

HAM. He did comply with his dug, before he fuck'd it.⁶ Thus has he (and many more of the

⁵ *This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.*] I see no particular propriety in the image of the lapwing. Osrick did not run till he had done his business. We may read, — *This lapwing ran away* — That is, *this fellow was full of unimportant bustle from his birth.* JOHNSON.

The same image occurs in Ben Jonson's *Staple of News*:

" ——— and coachmen

" To mount their boxes reverently, and drive

" Like lapwings with a shell upon their heads,

" Thorough the streets."

And I have since met with it in several other plays. The meaning, I believe, is — This is a forward fellow. So, in *The White Devil, or Vittoria Corombona*, 1612:

" ——— Forward lapwing,

" He flies with the shell on's head."

Again, in Greene's *Never too late*, 1616: "Are you no sooner hatched, with the lapwing, but you will run away with the shell on your head?"

Again, in *Revenge for Honour*, by Chapman:

" Boldness enforces youth to hard atchievements

" Before their time; makes them run forth like lapwings

" From their warm nest, part of the shell yet sticking

" Unto their downy heads." STEEVENS.

I believe, Hamlet means to say that Osrick is, bustling and impetuous, and yet "but raw in respect of his quick fall." So, in *The Character of an Oxford Incendiary*, 1643: "This lapwing incendiary ran away half-hatch'd from Oxford, to raise a combustion in Scotland."

In Meres's *Wil's Treasury*, 1598, we have the same image expressed exactly in our poet's words: "As the lapwing runneth away with the shell on her head, as soon as she is hatched," &c.

MALONE.

⁶ *He did comply with his dug, &c.*] Thus the folio. The quarto, 1604, reads—*A* [i. e. *he*] did, sir, with his dug, &c. For comply Dr. Warburton and the subsequent editors; read—*compliment*. The verb *to compliment* was not used, as I think, in the time of Shakspeare. MALONE.

I doubt whether any alteration be necessary. Shakspeare seems to have used *comply* in the sense in which we use the verb *compliment*.

same breed,⁷ that, I know, the drossy age dotes on,) only got the tune of the time, and outward habit of encounter;⁸ a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnow'd opinions;⁹ and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.²

See before, A& II. sc. ii: "——let me *comply* with you in this garb." TYRWHITT.

⁷ —— *and many more of the same breed,*] The first folio has — *and mine more of the same beavy.* The second folio — *and nine more* &c. Perhaps the last is the true reading. STEEVENS.

There may be a propriety in *bevy*, as he has just called him a *lapwing*. TOLLET.

"Many more of the same breed," is the reading of the quarto, 1604. MALONE.

⁸ —— *outward habit of encounter;*] Thus the folio. The quartos read — *out of an habit of encounter.* STEEVENS.

Outward habit of encounter, is exterior politeness of address; in allusion to Osrick's last speech. HENLEY.

We should, I think, read — *an outward habit*, &c. MALONE.

⁹ —— *a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions;*] This passage in the quarto stands thus: — "They have got out of the habit of encounter, a kind of misty collection, which carries them through and through the most profane and trennowned opinions." If this printer preserved any traces of the original, our author wrote, "the most *sane* and *renowned* opinions," which is better than *fann'd* and *winnow'd*.

The meaning is, "these men have got the cant of the day, a superficial readiness of slight and cursory conversation, a kind of frothy collection of fashionable prattle, which yet carries them through the most select and approving judgements. This airy facility of talk sometimes imposes upon wise men."

Who has not seen this observation verified? JOHNSON.

The quarto, 1604, reads, "——dotes on; only got the tune of the time, and out of *an habit*," &c. and — not *misty*, but *histy*; the folio rightly, *ysty*: the same quarto has not *trennowned*, but *trennowed* (a corruption of *winnowed*,) for which (according to the usual process,) the next quarto gave *trennowned*. *Fond* and *winnowed* is the reading of the folio. MALONE.

Fond is evidently opposed to *winnowed*. *Fond*, in the language

Enter a Lord.

LORD. My lord,³ his majesty commended him to you by young Osrick, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: He sends to know, if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

HAM. I am constant to my purposes, they follow

of Shakspeare's age, signified *foolish*. So, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

"Thou naughty jailer, why art thou so fond," &c.

Winnowed is *sifted*, *examined*. The sense is then, that their conversation was yet successful enough to make them passable not only with the weak, but with those of sounder judgement. The same opposition in terms is visible in the reading which the quartos offer. *Profane* or *vulgar* is opposed to *trenowned*, or *thrice renowned*.

STEEVENS.

Fann'd and *winnow'd* seems right to me. Both words *winnowed*, *fand** and *drest*, occur together in Markham's *English Husbandman*, p. 117. So do *fan'd* and *winnow'd*, *fanned* and *winnowed* in his *Husbandry*, p. 18, 76, and 77. So, Shakspeare mentions together the *fan* and *wind* in *Troilus and Cressida*, A&V. sc. iii.

TOLLET.

On considering this passage, it always appeared to me that we ought to read, "the most *sound* and *winnowed* opinions:" and I have been confirmed in that conjecture by a passage I lately met with in *Howel's Letters*, where speaking of a man merely contemplative, he says, "Besides he may want judgement in the choice of his authors, and knows not how to turn his hand either in weighing or *winnowing* the *soundest* opinions." Book III. Letter viii.

M. MASON.

² — do but blow them &c.] These men of show, without solidity, are like bubbles raised from soap and water, which dance, and glitter, and please the eye, but if you extend them, by blowing hard, separate into a mist; so if you oblige these specious talkers to extend their compass of conversation, they at once discover the tenuity of their intellects. JOHNSON.

³ My lord, &c.] All that passes between *Hamlet* and this *Lord* is omitted in the folio. STEEVENS.

* So written without the apostrophe, and easily might in Ms. be mistaken for *fonds*.

the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now, or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

LORD. The king, and queen, and all are coming down.

HAM. In happy time.

LORD. The queen desires you, to use some gentle entertainment⁴ to Laertes, before you fall to play.

HAM. She well instructs me. [Exit Lord.

HOR. You will lose this wager, my lord.

HAM. I do not think so; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds.⁵ But thou would'st not think, how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter.

HOR. Nay, good my lord,—

HAM. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving,⁶ as would, perhaps, trouble a woman.

HOR. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it:⁷

⁴ — gentle entertainment —] Mild and temperate conversation. JOHNSON.

⁵ I shall win at the odds.] I shall succeed with the advantage that I am allowed. MALONE.

⁶ — a kind of gain-giving,] Gain-giving is the same as mis-giving. STEEVENS.

⁷ If your mind dislike any thing, obey it:] With these presages of future evils arising in the mind, the poet has fore-run many events which are to happen at the conclusions of his plays; and sometimes so particularly, that even the circumstances of calamity are minutely hinted at, as in the instance of Juliet, who tells her lover from the window, that he appears like one dead in the bottom of a tomb. The supposition that the genius of the mind gave an alarm before approaching dissolution, is a very ancient one, and perhaps can never be totally driven out: yet it must be allowed the merit of adding beauty to poetry, however injurious it may sometimes prove to the weak and the superstitious. STEEVENS.

I will forestal their repair hither, and say, you are not fit.

HAM. Not a whit, we defy augury; there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all: Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes?⁸ Let be,

⁸ *Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes?*] The old quarto reads,—*Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.* This is the true reading. Here the premises conclude right, and the argument drawn out at length is to this effect: "It is true, that, by death, we lose all the goods of life: yet seeing this loss is no otherwise an evil than as we are sensible of it, and since death removes all sense of it, what matters it how soon we lose them? Therefore come what will, I am prepared." WARBURTON.

The reading of the quarto was right, but in some other copy the harshness of the transposition was softened, and the passage stood thus:—*Since no man knows aught of what he leaves.* For *knows* was printed in the later copies *has*, by a slight blunder in such typographers.

I do not think Dr. Warburton's interpretation of the passage the best that it will admit. The meaning may be this,—*Since no man knows aught of the state of life which he leaves*, since he cannot judge what other years may produce, why should he be afraid of leaving life betimes? Why should he dread an early death, of which he cannot tell whether it is an exclusion of happiness, or an interception of calamity. I despise the superstition of augury and omens, which has no ground in reason or piety; my comfort is, that I cannot fall but by the direction of Providence.

Sir T. Hanmer has,—*Since no man owes aught*, a conjecture not very reprehensible. *Since no man can call any possession certain*, what is it to leave? JOHNSON.

Dr. Warburton has truly stated the reading of the first quarto, 1604. The folio reads,—*Since no man has ought of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?*

In the late editions neither copy has been followed. MALONE.

Enter King, Queen, LAERTES, Lords, OSRICK, and Attendants with foils, &c.

KING. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[*The King puts the hand of LAERTES into that of HAMLET.*

HAM. Give me your pardon, fir:⁹ I have done you wrong;

But pardon it, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows, and you must needs have heard,

How I am punish'd with a sore distraction.

What I have done,

That might your nature, honour, and exception,

Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never, Hamlet:

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

And, when he's not himself, does wrong Laertes,

Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.

Who does it then? His madness: If't be so,

Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;

His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

Sir,² in this audience,

Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil

Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,

That I have shot my arrow o'er the house,

And hurt my brother.

⁹ *Give me your pardon, fir:]* I wish Hamlet had made some other defence; it is unsuitable to the character of a good or a brave man, to shelter himself in falsehood. JOHNSON.

² *Sir, &c.]* This passage I have restored from the folio.

STEEVENS.

LAER. I am fatisfied in nature,³
 Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
 To my revenge: but in my terms of honour,
 I stand aloof; and will no reconciliation,
 Till by some elder masters, of known honour,⁴
 I have a voice and precedent of peace,
 To keep my name ungor'd: But till that time,
 I do receive your offer'd love like love,
 And will not wrong it.

HAM. I embrace it freely;
 And will this brother's wager frankly play.—
 Give us the foils; come on.

LAER. Come, one for me.

HAM. I'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine igno-
 rance

³ *I am fatisfied in nature, &c.*] This was a piece of satire on fantastical honour. Though *nature* is fatisfied, yet he will ask advice of older men of the sword, whether *artificial* honour ought to be contented with Hamlet's submission.

There is a passage somewhat similar in *The Maid's Tragedy*:

“*Evad.* Will you forgive me then?

“*Mel.* Stay, I must *ask mine honour* first.” STEEVENS.

⁴ *Till by some elder masters, of known honour.*] This is said in allusion to an English custom. I learn from an ancient MS. of which the reader will find a more particular account in a note to *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Vol. V. p. 31, n. 3, that in Queen Elizabeth's time there were “four ancient masters of defence,” in the city of London. They appear to have been the referees in many affairs of honour, and exacted tribute from all inferior practitioners of the art of fencing, &c. STEEVENS.

Our poet frequently alludes to English customs, and may have done so here, but I do not believe that gentlemen ever submitted points of honour to persons who exhibited themselves for money as prize-fighters on the publick stage; though they might appeal in certain cases to Raleigh, Essex, or Southampton, who from their high rank, their course of life, and established reputation, might with strict propriety be styled, “elder masters, of known honour.”

MALONE.

Your skill shall, like a star i'the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

LAER. You mock me, sir.

HAM. No, by this hand.

KING. Give them the foils, young Osrick. —
Cousin Hamlet,

You know the wager?

HAM. Very well, my lord;

Your grace hath laid the odds o'the weaker side.⁵

KING. I do not fear it; I have seen you both:—
But since he's better'd, we have therefore odds.⁶

LAER. This is too heavy, let me see another.

HAM. This likes me well: These foils have all a
length? [*They prepare to play.*

OSR. Ay, my good lord.

⁵ *Your grace hath laid the odds o'the weaker side.*] When the odds were on the side of Laertes, who was to hit Hamlet twelve times to nine, it was perhaps the author's slip. Sir T. Hanmer reads —

Your grace hath laid upon the weaker side. JOHNSON.

I see no reason for altering this passage. Hamlet considers the things *impon'd* by the King, as of more value than those *impon'd* by Laertes; and therefore says, "that he had laid the odds on the weaker side." M. MASON.

Hamlet either means, that what the king had laid was more valuable than what Laertes staked; or that *the king hath made his bet, an advantage being given to the weaker party.* I believe the first is the true interpretation. In the next line but one the word *odds* certainly means *an advantage given to the party*, but here it may have a different sense. This is not an uncommon practice with our poet. MALONE.

The king had wagered, on Hamlet, *six Barbary horses*, against a few rapiers, poniards, &c. that is, about *twenty to one*. These are the *odds* here meant. RITSON.

⁶ *But since he's better'd, we have therefore odds.*] These odds were *twelve to nine* in favour of Hamlet, by Laertes giving him *three*.

RITSON.

KING. Set me the stoups of wine⁷ upon that table:—

If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange.
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;
And in the cup an union shall he throw,³

⁷ — the stoups of wine —] A *stoup* is a kind of *flaggon*. See Vol. V. p. 267, n. 2. STREEVENS.

Containing somewhat more than two quarts. MALONE.

Stoup is a common word in Scotland at his day, and denotes a pewter vessel, resembling our wine measure; but of no determinate quantity, *that* being ascertained by an adjunct, as *gallon-stoup*, *pint-stoup*, *mutchkin-stoup*, &c. The vessel in which they fetch or keep water is also called the *water-stoup*. A *stoup of wine* is therefore equivalent to a pitcher of wine. RITSON.

³ And in the cup an union shall he throw,] In some editions,

And in the cup an onyx shall he throw.

This is a various reading in several of the old copies; but *union* seems to me to be the true word. If I am not mistaken, neither the *onyx*, nor *sardonyx*, are jewels which ever found place in an imperial crown. An *union* is the finest sort of pearl, and has its place in all crowns, and coronets. Besides, let us consider what the King says on Hamlet's giving Laertes the first hit:

"Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this *pearl* is thine;

"Here's to thy health."

Therefore, if an *union* be a *pearl*, and an *onyx* a gem, or stone, quite differing in its nature from *pearls*; the king saying, that Hamlet has earn'd the *pearl*, I think, amounts to a demonstration that it was an *union* pearl, which he meant to throw into the cup.

THEOBALD.

And in the cup an union shall he throw,] Thus the folio rightly. In the first quarto by the carelessness of the printer, for *union*, we have *unice*, which in the subsequent quarto copies was made *onyx*. An *union* is a very precious pearl. See Bullokar's *English Expositor*, 1616, and Florio's *Italian Dictionary*, 1598, in v. MALONE.

So, in *Soliman and Perseda*:

"Ay, were it Cleopatra's *union*."

The *union* is thus mentioned in P. Holland's translation of *Pliny's Natural History*: "And hereupon it is that our dainties and delicacies here at Rome, &c. call them *unions*, as a man would say singular and by themselves alone."

Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn; Give me the cups;
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,
Now the king drinks to Hamlet. — Come, begin; —
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

HAM. Come on, sir.

LAER. Come, my lord. [*They play.*

HAM. One.

LAER. No.

HAM. Judgement.

OSR. A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAER. Well, — again.

KING. Stay, give me drink: Hamlet, this pearl
is thine;⁹

Here's to thy health. — Give him the cup.

[*Trumpets sound; and cannon shot off within.*

HAM. I'll play this bout first, set it by awhile.

, Come. — Another hit; What say you? [*They play.*

To swallow a *pearl* in a draught seems to have been equally common to royal and mercantile prodigality. So, in the Second Part of *If you know not Me, you know Nobody*, 1616, Sir Thomas Gresham says:

“ Here 16,000 pound at one clap goes.

“ Instead of sugar, Gresham drinks this *pearle*

“ Unto his queen and mistress.”

It may be observed, however, that *pearls* were supposed to possess an exhilarating quality. Thus, *Rondelet*, Lib. I. de Testac. c. xv:
“ *Uniones quæ à conchis &c. valde cordiales sunt.*”

STEEVENS.

⁹ — *this pearl is thine;*] Under pretence of throwing a *pearl* into the cup, the king may be supposed to drop some poisonous drug into the wine. Hamlet seems to suspect this, when he afterwards discovers the effects of the poison, and tauntingly asks him, —
“ Is the union here?” STEEVENS.

LAER. A touch, a touch, I do confess,

KING. Our son shall win.

QUEEN. He's fat, and scant of breath.² —

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows :

The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.³

HAM. Good madam, —

KING.

Gertrude, do not drink.

QUEEN. I will, my lord ; — I pray you, pardon me.

KING. It is the poison'd cup ; it is too late.

[*Aside.*

HAM. I dare not drink yet, madam ; by and by.

QUEEN. Come, let me wipe thy face.⁴

² Queen. *He's fat, and scant of breath.*] It seems that John Lowin, who was the original *Falstaff*, was no less celebrated for his performance of *Henry VIII.* and *Hamlet*. See the *Historia Histrionica*, &c. If he was adapted, by the corpulence of his figure, to appear with propriety in the two former of these characters, Shakspeare might have put this observation into the mouth of her majesty, to apologize for the want of such elegance of person as an audience might expect to meet with in the representative of the youthful prince of Denmark, whom Ophelia speaks of as "the glass of fashion and the mould of form." This, however, is mere conjecture, as Joseph Taylor likewise acted *Hamlet* during the life of Shakspeare. STEEVENS.

The author of *Historia Histrionica*, and Downes the prompter, concur in saying that Taylor was the performer of *Hamlet*. Roberts the player alone has asserted, (apparently without any authority,) that this part was performed by Lowin. MALONE.

³ *The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.*] i. e. (in humbler language) drinks good luck to you. A similar phrase occurs in *David and Bethsabe*, 1599 :

"With full carouses to his fortune past." STEEVENS.

⁴ *Come, let me wipe thy face.*] These very words (the present repetition of which might have been spared) are addressed by Doll Tearsheet to Falstaff, when he was heated by his pursuit of Pistol. See Vol. XIII, p. 95. STEEVENS.

LAER. My lord, I'll hit him now.

KING. I do not think it.

LAER. And yet it is almost against my conscience.
[*Aside.*

HAM. Come, for the third, Laertes: You do but dally;

I pray you, pass with your best violence;
I am afraid, you make a wanton of me.⁵

LAER. Say you so? come on. [They play.

OSR. Nothing neither way.

LAER. Have at you now.

[LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then, in scuffling,
they change rapiers, and HAMLET wounds
LAERTES.

KING. Part them, they are incens'd.

HAM. Nay, come again. [The Queen falls.

OSR. Look to the queen there, ho!

HOR. They bleed on both sides:—How is it,
my lord?

OSR. How is't, Laertes?

⁵ ——— you make a wanton of me.] A wanton was a man feeble and effeminate. In *Cymbeline*, Imogen says, I am not

“ —so citizen a wanton, as

“ To seem to die, ere sick.” JOHNSON.

Rather, you trifle with me as if you were playing with a child.
So, in *Romeo and Juliet*:

“ ——— I would have thee gone,

“ And yet no further than a wanton's bird,

“ That lets it hop a little from her hand,

“ And with a silk thread pulls it back again.” RITSON.

A passage in *King John* shows that wanton here means a man feeble and effeminate, as Dr. Johnson has explained it:

“ ——— Shall a beardless boy,

“ A cocker'd filken wanton, brave our fields,

“ And flesh his spirit in a warlike foil,” &c. MALONE.

LAER. Why, as a woodcock to my own springe,
Ofrick;

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

HAM. How does the queen?

KING. She swoons to see them bleed.

QUEEN. No, no, the drink, the drink, — O my
dear Hamlet! —

The drink, the drink; — I am poison'd! [*Dies.*

HAM. O villainy! — Ho! let the door be lock'd:
Treachery! seek it out. [*LAERTES falls.*

LAER. It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art
slain;

No medicine in the world can do thee good,

In thee there is not half an hour's life;

The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,

Unbated, and envenom'd: the foul practice

Had turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie,

Never to rise again: Thy mother's poison'd;

I can no more; — the king, the king's to blame.

HAM. The point

Envenom'd too! — Then, venom, to thy work.

[*Stabs the King.*

OSR. AND LORDS. Treason! treason!

KING. O, yet defend me, friends, I am but hurt.

HAM. Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned
Dane,

Drink off this potion: — Is the union here? ⁵

Follow my mother. [*King dies.*

⁵ — *Is the union here?*] In this place likewise the quarto reads, an *onyx*. STEEVENS.

— *Is the union here?*] Thus the folio. In a former passage in the quarto, 1604, for *union* we had *unice*; here it has *onyx*.

It should seem from this line, and Laertes's next speech, that Hamlet here forces the expiring king to drink some of the poisoned cup, and that he dies while it is at his lips. MALONE.

LAER. He is justly serv'd;
It is a poison temper'd by himself. —
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee;
Nor thine on me! [Dies.]

HAM. Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio: — Wretched queen, adieu! —
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,⁶
Had I but time, (as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest,)⁷ O, I could tell you, —
But let it be: — Horatio, I am dead;
Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

HOR. Never believe it;
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane,
Here's yet some liquor left.

HAM. As thou'rt a man, —
Give me the cup; let go; by heaven, I'll have it. —
O God! — Horatio,⁸ what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind
me?⁹

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity a while,

⁶ *That are but mutes or audience to this act,*] That are either mere auditors of this catastrophe, or at most only mute performers, that fill the stage without any part in the action. JOHNSON.

⁷ — (as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest,)] So, in our poet's 74th Sonnet:
" — when that fell arrest,
" Without all bail, shall carry me away, —." MALONE.

A *serjeant* is a bailiff, or sheriff's officer. RITSON.

⁸ O God! — *Horatio, &c.*] Thus the quarto, 1604. Folio: O good Horatio. MALONE.

⁹ — shall live behind me?] Thus the folio. The quartos read — shall I leave behind me. STEEVENS.

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story. —

[*March afar off, and shot within.*

What warlike noise is this?

OSR. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from
Poland,

To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

HAM. O, I die, Horatio ;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit ;
I cannot live to hear the news from England ;
But I do prophecy, the election lights
On Fortinbras ; he has my dying voice ;

⁷ *The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit ;*] Thus the first quarto, and the first folio. Alluding, I suppose, to a victorious cock exulting over his conquered antagonist. The same word occurs in *Lingua*, &c. 1607 :

“ Shall I? th’ embassadrefs of gods and men,
“ That pull’d proud Phœbe from her brightsome sphere,
“ And dark’d Apollo’s countenance with a word,
“ Be *over-crow’d*, and breathe without revenge? ”

Again, in Hall’s *Satires*, Lib. V. Sat. ii :

“ Like the vain bubble of Iberian pride,
“ That *over-croweth* all the world beside.”

This phrase often occurs in the controversial pieces of Gabriel Harvey, 1903, &c. STEEVENS.

This word, [*o'er-crows*] for which Mr. Pope and succeeding editors have substituted *over-grows*, is used by Holinshed in his *History of Ireland* : “ These noblemen laboured with tooth and nayle to *over-crowe*, and consequently to overthrow, one another.”

Again, in the epistle prefixed to Nashe’s *Apologie of Pierce Penniless*, 1593 : “ About two yeeres since a certayne demi-divine took upon him to set his foote to mine, and *over-crowe* mee with comparative terms.”

I find the reading which Mr. Pope and the subsequent editors adopted, (*o'ergrows*,) was taken from a late quarto of no authority, printed in 1637. MALONE.

The accepted reading is the more quaint, the rejected one, the more elegant of the two ; at least Mr. Rowe has given the latter to his dying Amestris in *The Ambitious Stepmother* :

“ The gloom grows o'er me.” STEEVENS.

So tell him, with the occurrents,⁸ more and less,
Which have solicited,⁹—The rest is silence. [*Dies.*

HOR. Now cracks a noble heart:—Good night,
sweet prince;
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!²

⁸ ——— *the occurrents,*] i. e. incidents. The word is now dis-
used. So, in *The Hog hath lost his Pearl*, 1614:

“Such strange *occurrents* of my fore-past life.”

Again, in *The Barons' Wars*, by Drayton, Canto I:

“With each *occurrent*, right in his degree.” STEEVENS.

⁹ *Which have solicited,*] *Solicited*, for brought on the event.

WARBURTON.

Warburton says that *solicited*, means *brought on the event*; but that is a meaning the word cannot import. That have *solicited*, means that have *excited*;—but the sentence is left imperfect.

M. MASON.

What Hamlet would have said, the poet has not given us any ground for conjecturing. The words seem to mean no more than —*which have incited me to*—. MALONE.

² *Now cracks a noble heart:—Good night, sweet prince;*

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!] So, in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, 1609:

“If thou liv’st, Pericles, thou hast a heart,

“That even cracks for woe.”

The concluding words of the unfortunate Lord Essex's prayer on the scaffold were these: “——— and when my life and body shall part, send thy blessed angels, which may receive my soule, and convey it to the joys of heaven.”

Hamlet had certainly been exhibited before the execution of that amiable nobleman; but the words here given to Horatio might have been one of the many additions made to this play. As no copy of an earlier date than 1604 has yet been discovered, whether Lord Essex's last words were in our author's thoughts, cannot now be ascertained. MALONE.

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!] Rather from Marston's *Insatiate Countess*, 1603:

“An host of angels be thy convey hence!”

STEEVENS.

Let us review for a moment the behaviour of Hamlet, on the strength of which Horatio sounds this eulogy, and recommends him to the patronage of angels.

Why does the drum come hither? [*March within.*]

Hamlet, at the command of his father's ghost, undertakes with seeming alacrity to revenge the murder; and declares he will banish all other thoughts from his mind. He makes, however, but one effort to keep his word, and that is, when he mistakes Polonius for the king. On another occasion, he defers his purpose till he can find an opportunity of taking his uncle when he is least prepared for death, that he may insure damnation to his soul. Though he assassinated Polonius by accident, yet he deliberately procures the execution of his school-fellows, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who appear not, from any circumstances in this play, to have been acquainted with the treacherous purposes of the mandate they were employed to carry. To embitter their fate, and hazard their punishment beyond the grave, he denies them even the few moments necessary for a brief confession of their sins. Their end (as he declares in a subsequent conversation with Horatio) gives him no concern, for they obtruded themselves into the service, and he thought he had a right to destroy them. From his brutal conduct toward Ophelia, he is not less accountable for her distraction and death. He interrupts the funeral designed in honour of this lady, at which both the king and queen were present; and, by such an outrage to decency, renders it still more necessary for the usurper to lay a second stratagem for his life, though the first had proved abortive. He insults the brother of the dead, and boasts of an affection for his sister, which, before, he had denied to her face; and yet at this very time must be considered as desirous of supporting the character of a madman, so that the openness of his confession is not to be imputed to him as a virtue. He apologizes to Horatio afterwards for the absurdity of this behaviour, to which, he says, he was provoked by that nobleness of fraternal grief, which, indeed, he ought rather to have applauded than condemned. Dr. Johnson has observed, that to bring about a reconciliation with Laertes, he has availed himself of a dishonest fallacy; and to conclude, it is obvious to the most careless spectator or reader, that he kills the king at last to revenge himself, and not his father.

Hamlet cannot be said to have pursued his ends by very warrantable means; and if the poet, when he sacrificed him at last, meant to have enforced such a moral, it is not the worst that can be deduced from the play; for, as *Maximus*, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Valentinian*, says,

“ Although his justice were as white as truth,

“ His way was crooked to it; that condemns him.”

The late Dr. Akenfide once observed to me, that the conduct of Hamlet was every way unnatural and indefensible, unless he were to be regarded as a young man whose intellects were in some degree

Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors, and Others.

FORT. Where is this fight?

HOR. What is it, you would see?

impaired by his own misfortunes; by the death of his father, the loss of expected sovereignty, and a sense of shame resulting from the hasty and incestuous marriage of his mother.

I have dwelt the longer on this subject, because Hamlet seems to have been hitherto regarded as a hero not undeserving the pity of the audience; and because no writer on Shakspeare has taken the pains to point out the immoral tendency of his character.

STEEVENS.

Mr. Ritson controverts the justice of Mr. Steevens's strictures on the character of Hamlet, which he undertakes to defend. The arguments he makes use of for this purpose are too long to be here inserted, and therefore I shall content myself with referring to them. See REMARKS, p. 217, to 224. REED.

Some of the charges here brought against Hamlet appear to me questionable at least, if not unfounded. I have already observed that in the novel on which this play is constructed, the ministers who by the king's order accompanied the young prince to England, and carried with them a packet in which his death was concerted, were apprized of its contents; and therefore we may *presume* that Shakspeare meant to describe their representatives, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as equally criminal; as combining with the king to deprive Hamlet of his life. His procuring their execution therefore does not with certainty appear to have been an unprovoked cruelty, and *might* have been considered by him as necessary to his *future safety*; knowing, as he must have known, that they had devoted themselves to the service of the king in whatever he should command. The principle on which he acted, is ascertained by the following lines, from which also it may be inferred that the poet meant to represent Hamlet's school-fellows as privy to the plot against his life:

“ There's letters seal'd: and my two school-fellows—
 “ Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,
 “ They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
 “ And marshall me to knavery: Let it work;
 “ For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer

A a 2

If aught of woe, or wonder, cease your search:

“ Hoist with his own petar; and it shall go hard,
 “ But I will delve one yard below *their* mines,
 “ And blow them to the moon.”

Another charge is, that “ *he comes** to disturb the funeral of Ophelia:” but the fact is otherwise represented in the first scene of the fifth act: for when the funeral procession appears, (which he does not seek, but finds,) he exclaims,

“ The queen, the courtiers: *who is this they follow,*
 “ And with such maimed rites?”

nor does he know it to be the funeral of Ophelia, till Laertes mentions that the dead body was that of his sister.

I do not perceive that he is accountable for the madness of Ophelia. He did not mean to kill her father when concealed behind the arras, but the king: and still less did he intend to deprive her of her reason and her life: her subsequent distraction therefore can no otherwise be laid to his charge, than as an unforeseen consequence from his too ardently pursuing the object recommended to him by his father.

He appears to have been induced to leap into Ophelia's grave, not with a design to insult Laertes, but from his love to her, (which then he had no reason to conceal,) and from the *bravery of her brother's grief*, which excited him (not to condemn that brother, as has been stated, but) to *vie* with him in the expression of affection and sorrow:

“ Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,
 “ Until my eyelids will no longer wag.—
 “ I lov'd Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
 “ Could not with all their quantity of love
 “ Make up my sum.”

When Hamlet says, “ the bravery of his grief did put me into a *towering passion*,” I think, he means, into a lofty expression (not of *resentment*, but) of *sorrow*. So, in *King John*, Vol. XI. p. 354. n. 9.

“ She is *sad* and *passionate* at your highness' tent.”

Again, more appositely in the play before us:

“ The instant burst of clamour that she made,
 “ (Unless things mortal move them not at all,)
 “ Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,
 “ And *passion* in the gods.”

I may also add, that he neither assaulted, nor insulted Laertes, till that nobleman had cursed him, and seized him by the throat.

MALONE.

* ——— *he comes*--] The words stood thus in edit. 1778, &c. STREVENS.

FORT. This quarry cries on havock!³—O proud death!

What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,⁴
That thou so many princes, at a shot,
So bloodily hast struck?

1. AMB. The fight is dismal;
And our affairs from England come too late:
The ears are senseless, that should give us hearing,
To tell him, his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:
Where should we have our thanks?

HOR. Not from his mouth,⁵
Had it the ability of life to thank you;
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are here arriv'd; give order, that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view;⁶

³ *This quarry cries on havock !]* Sir T. Hanmer reads,
——cries out, *havock !*

To cry on, was to *exclaim against*. I suppose, when unfair sportsmen destroyed more *quarry* or *game* than was reasonable, the censure was to cry, *Havock*. JOHNSON.

We have the same phraseology in *Othello*, A & V. sc. i:

“ —— Whose noise is this, that *cries on murder*?”

See the note there. MALONE.

⁴ *What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,*] Shakspeare has already employed this allusion to the *Choæ*, or *feasts of the dead*, which were anciently celebrated at Athens, and are mentioned by Plutarch in the life of *Antonius*. Our author likewise makes *Talbot* say to his son in the First Part of *King Henry VI* :

“ Now art thou come unto a *feast of death*.”

STEEVENS.

⁵ ——his mouth,] i. e. the king's. STEEVENS.

⁶ ——give order, that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view;] This idea was ap-

And let me speak, to the yet unknowing world,
 How these things came about: So shall your hear
 Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts;⁷
 Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters;
 Of deaths put on⁸ by cunning, and forc'd cause;⁹
 And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
 Fall'n on the inventors' heads: all this can I
 Truly deliver.

FORT. Let us haste to hear it,
 And call the noblest to the audience.
 For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune;
 I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,²
 Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

parently taken from Arthur Brooke's *Tragicall Hystory of Romeus and Juliet*, 1562:

"The prince did straight ordaine, the *corfes* that wer founde,
 "Should be set forth upon a stage hys raysed from the
 grounde," &c. STEEVENS.

⁷ *Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts;*] *Carnal* is a word used by Shakspeare as an adjective to *carnage*. RITSON.

Of sanguinary and unnatural acts, to which the perpetrator was instigated by concupiscence, or, to use our poet's own words, by "*carnal stings*." The speaker alludes to the murder of old Hamlet by his brother, previous to his incestuous union with Gertrude. A *Remarker* asks, "was the relationship between the usurper and the deceased king a secret confined to Horatio?"—No, but the murder of Hamlet by Claudius was a secret which the young prince had imparted to Horatio, and had imparted to him alone; and to this it is he principally, though covertly, alludes.—*Carnal* is the reading of the only authentick copies, the quarto 1604, and the folio 1623. The modern editors, following a quarto of no authority, for *carnal*, read *cruel*. MALONE.

The edition immediately preceding that of Mr. Malone, reads—*carnal* and not *cruel*, as here asserted. REED.

⁸ *Of deaths put on*—] i. e. instigated, produced. See Vol. XVII. p. 311. u. 9. MALONE.

⁹ — and forc'd cause;] Thus the folio. The quartos read— and for no cause. STEEVENS.

² — some rights of memory in this kingdom,] Some rights, which are remembered in this kingdom. MALONE.

HOR. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on
more :³

But let this same be presently perform'd,
Even while men's minds are wild ; lest more mis-
chance,

On plots, and errors, happen.

FORT. Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage ;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have prov'd most royally : and, for his passage,
The soldiers' musick, and the rites of war,
Speak loudly for him.—

Take up the bodies :—Such a fight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.

Go, bid the soldiers shoot. [A dead march.

[Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies ; after which,
a peal of ordnance is shot off.⁴

³ *And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more :*] No is the reading of the old quartos, but certainly a mistaken one. We say, a man will no more draw breath ; but that a man's voice will draw no more, is, I believe, an expression without any authority. I choose to espouse the reading of the elder folio :

And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more

And this is the poet's meaning. Hamlet, just before his death, had said :

“ But I do prophecy, the election lights

“ On Fortinbras : he has my dying voice ;

“ So tell him,” &c.

Accordingly, Horatio here delivers that message ; and very justly infers, that Hamlet's *voice* will be seconded by others, and procure them in favour of Fortinbras's succession. THEOBALD.

⁴ If the dramas of Shakspeare were to be characterised, each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from the rest, we must allow to the tragedy of Hamlet the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous, that the argument of the play would make a long tale. The scenes are interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity ; with merriment that includes judicious

and instructive observations ; and solemnity not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. How characters appear from time to time in continual succession, exhibiting various forms of life and particular modes of conversation. The pretended madness of Hamlet causes much mirth, the mournful distraction of Ophelia fills the heart with tenderness, and every personage produces the effect intended, from the apparition that in the first act chills the blood with horror, to the fop in the last, that exposes affectation to just contempt.

The conduct is perhaps not wholly secure against objections. The action is indeed for the most part in continual progression, but there are some scenes which neither forward nor retard it. Of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause, for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity. He plays the madman most, when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.

Hamlet is, through the whole piece, rather an instrument than an agent. After he has, by the stratagem of the play, convicted the king, he makes no attempt to punish him ; and his death is at last effected by an incident which Hamlet had no part in producing.

The catastrophe is not very happily produced ; the exchange of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity, than a stroke of art. A scheme might easily be formed to kill Hamlet with the dagger, and Laertes with the bowl.

The poet is accused of having shown little regard to poetical justice, and may be charged with equal neglect of poetical probability. The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose ; the revenge which he demands is not obtained, but by the death of him that was required to take it ; and the gratification, which would arise from the destruction of an usurper and a murderer, is abated by the untimely death of Ophelia, the young, the beautiful, the harmless, and the pious. JOHNSON.

The levity of behaviour which Hamlet assumes immediately after the disappearance of the ghost in the first act, [sc. v.] has been objected to ; but the writer of some sensible Remarks on this tragedy, published in 1736, justly observes, that the poet's object there was, that Marcellus " might not imagine that the ghost had revealed to Hamlet some matter of great consequence to him, and that he might not therefore be suspected of any deep design."

" I have heard (adds the same writer,) many persons wonder, why the poet should bring in this ghost in complete armour.—I think these reasons may be given for it. We are to consider, that he could introduce him in these dresses only ; in his regal dress, in a habit of interment, in a common habit, or in some fantastick

one of his own invention. Now let us examine, which was most likely to affect the spectators with passions proper on the occasion.—

“ The regal habit has nothing uncommon in it, nor surprising, nor could it give rise to any fine images. The habit of interment was something too horrible; for terror, not horror, is to be raised in the spectators. The common habit (or *habit the ville*, as the French call it,) was by no means proper for the occasion. It remains then that the poet should choose some habit from his own brain: but this certainly could not be proper, because invention in such a case would be so much in danger of falling into the grotesque, that it was not to be hazarded.

“ Now as to the armour, it was very suitable to a king who is described as a great warrior, and is very particular; and consequently affects the spectators without being fantastick.—

“ The king spurs on his son to revenge his foul and unnatural murder, from the two considerations chiefly; that he was sent into the other world without having had time to repent of his sins, and without the necessary sacraments, according to the church of Rome, and that consequently his soul was to suffer, if not eternal damnation, at least a long course of penance in purgatory; which aggravates the circumstances of his brother's barbarity; and secondly, that Denmark might not be the scene of usurpation and incest, and the throne thus polluted and profaned. For these reasons he prompts the young prince to revenge; else it would have been more becoming the character of such a prince as Hamlet's father is represented to have been, and more suitable to his present condition, to have left his brother to the divine punishment, and to a possibility of repentance for his base crime, which, by cutting him off, he must be deprived of.

“ To conform to the ground-work of his plot, Shakspeare makes the young prince feign himself mad. I cannot but think this to be injudicious; for so far from securing himself from any violence which he feared from the usurper, it seems to have been the most likely way of getting himself confined, and consequently debarred from an opportunity of revenging his father's death, which now seemed to be his only aim; and accordingly it was the occasion of his being sent away to England; which design, had it taken effect upon his life, he never could have revenged his father's murder. To speak truth, our poet by keeping too close to the ground-work of his plot, has fallen into an absurdity; for there appears no reason at all in nature, why the young prince did not put the usurper to death as soon as possible, especially as Hamlet is represented as a youth so brave, and so careless of his own life.

“ The case indeed is this. Had Hamlet gone naturally to work, as we could suppose such a prince to do in parallel circumstances, there would have been an end of our play. The poet there-

fore was obliged to delay his hero's revenge: but then he should have contrived some good reason for it.

“ His beginning his scenes of Hamlet's madness by his behaviour to Ophelia, was judicious, because by this means he might be thought to be mad for her, not that his brain was disturbed about state affairs, which would have been dangerous.

“ It does not appear whether Ophelia's madness was chiefly for her father's death, or for the loss of Hamlet. It is not often that young women run mad for the loss of their fathers. It is more natural to suppose that, like *Chimene*, in the *Cid*, her great sorrow proceeded from her father's being killed by the man she loved, and thereby making it indecent for her ever to marry him.

“ Laertes's character is a very odd one; it is not easy to say whether it is good or bad: but his consenting to the villainous contrivance of the usurper's to murder Hamlet, makes him much more a bad man than a good one.—It is a very nice conduct in the poet to make the usurper build his scheme upon the generous unsuspecting temper of the person he intends to murder, and thus to raise the prince's character by the confession of his enemy; to make the villain ten times more odious from his own mouth. The contrivance of the foil unbated, (i. e. without a button,) is methinks too gross a deceit to go down even with a man of the most unsuspecting nature.

“ Laertes's death and the queen's are truly poetical justice, and very naturally brought about, although I do not conceive it so easy to change rapiers in a scuffle without knowing it at the time. The death of the queen is particularly according to the strictest rules of poetical justice; for she loses her life by the villainy of the very person, who had been the cause of all her crimes.

“ Since the poet deferred so long the usurper's death, we must own that he has very naturally effected it, and still added fresh crimes to those the murderer had already committed.

“ Upon Laertes's repentance for contriving the death of Hamlet, one cannot but feel some sentiments of pity for him; but who can see or read the death of the young prince without melting into tears and compassion? Horatio's earnest desire to die with the prince, thus not to survive his friend, gives a stronger idea of his friendship for Hamlet in the few lines on that occasion, than many actions or expressions could possibly have done. And Hamlet's begging him *to draw his breath in this harsh world a little longer*, to clear his reputation, and manifest his innocence, is very suitable to his virtuous character, and the honest regard that all men should have not to be misrepresented to posterity: that they may not set a bad example, when in reality they have set a good one: which is the only motive that can, in reason, recommend the love of fame and glory.

“ Horatio's desire of having the bodies carried to a stage, &c. is very well imagined, and was the best way of satisfying the request of his deceased friend: and he acts in this, and in all points, suitably to the manly honest character, under which he is drawn throughout the piece. Besides, it gives a sort of content to the audience, that though their favourite (which must be Hamlet) did not escape with life, yet the greatest amends will be made him, which can be in this world, viz, justice done to his memory.

“ Fortinbras comes in very naturally at the close of the play, and lays a very just claim to the throne of Denmark, as he had the dying voice of the prince. He in a few words gives a noble character of Hamlet, and serves to carry off the deceased hero from the stage with the honours due to his birth and merit.” MALONE.

ACT II. SCENE II.

The rugged Pyrrhus, he, &c.] The two greatest poets of this and the last age, Mr. Dryden, in the preface to *Troilus and Cressida*, and Mr. Pope, in his note on this place, have concurred in thinking that Shakspeare produced this long passage with design to ridicule and expose the bombast of the play from whence it was taken; and that Hamlet's commendation of it is purely ironical. This is become the general opinion. I think just otherwise; and that it was given with commendation to upbraid the false taste of the audience of that time, which would not suffer them to do justice to the simplicity and sublime of this production. And I reason, first, from the character Hamlet gives of the play, from whence the passage is taken. Secondly, from the passage itself. And thirdly, from the effect it had on the audience.

Let us consider the character Hamlet gives of it. *The play I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general: but it was (as I received it, and others, whose judgement in such matters cried in the top of mine) an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember one said, there was no salt in the lines to make the matter savoury; nor no matter in the phrase that might indite the author of affection; but called it an honest method.* They who suppose the passage given to be ridiculed, must needs suppose this character to be

purely ironical. But if so, it is the strangest irony that ever was written. *It pleased not the multitude.* This we must conclude to be true, however ironical the rest be. Now the reason given of the designed ridicule is the supposed bombast. But those were the very plays, which at that time we know took with the multitude. And Fletcher wrote a kind of *Rehearsal* purposely to expose them. But say it is bombast, and that therefore it took not with the multitude. Hamlet presently tells us what it was that displeased them. *There was no salt in the lines to make the matter savoury; nor no matter in the phrase that might indite the author of affection; but called it an honest method.* Now whether a person speaks ironically or no, when he quotes others, yet common sense requires he should quote what they say. Now it could not be, if this play displeased because of the bombast, that those whom it displeased should give this reason for their dislike. The same inconsistencies and absurdities abound in every other part of Hamlet's speech, supposing it to be ironical; but take him as speaking his sentiments, the whole is of a piece; and to this purpose. The play, I remember, pleased not the multitude, and the reason was, its being wrote on the rules of the ancient drama; to which they were entire strangers. But, in my opinion, and in the opinion of those for whose judgement I have the highest esteem, it was an excellent play, *well digested in the scenes*, i. e. where the three unities were well preserved. *Set down with as much modesty as cunning*, i. e. where not only the art of composition, but the simplicity of nature, was carefully attended to. The characters were a faithful picture of life and manners, in which nothing was overcharged into farce. But these qualities, which gained my esteem, lost the publick's. For I remember, one said, *There was no salt in the lines to make the matter savoury*, i. e. there was not, according to the mode of that time, a fool or clown, to jolt, quibble, and talk freely. *Nor no matter in the phrase that might indite the author of affection*, i. e. nor none of those passionate, pathetick love scenes, so essential to modern tragedy. *But he called it an honest method*, i. e. he owned, however *tasteless* this method of writing, on the ancient plan, was to our times, yet it was chaste and pure; the distinguishing character of the Greek drama. I need only make one observation on all this; that, thus interpreted, it is the justest picture of a good tragedy, wrote on the ancient rules. And that I have rightly interpreted it, appears farther from what we find in the old quarto,—*An honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more HANDSOME than FINE*, i. e. it had a natural beauty, but none of the fucus of false art.

2. A second proof that this speech was given to be admired, is from the intrinsic merit of the speech itself; which contains the description of a circumstance very happily imagined, namely,

Ilium and Priam's falling together, with the effect it had on the destroyer.

— *The hellish Pyrrhus, &c.*

To, *Repugnant to command.*

The unnerved father falls, &c.

To, — *So after Pyrrhus' pause.*

Now this circumstance, illustrated with the fine similitude of the storm, is so highly worked up, as to have well deserved a place in Virgil's second book of the *Æneid*, even though the work had been carried on to that perfection which the Roman poet had conceived.

3. The third proof is, from the effects which followed on the recital. Hamlet, his best character, approves it; the player is deeply affected in repeating it; and only the foolish Polonius tired with it. We have said enough before of Hamlet's sentiments. As for the player, he changes colour, and the tears start from his eyes. But our author was too good a judge of nature to make bombast and unnatural sentiment produce such an effect. Nature and Horace both instructed him:

Si vis me flere, dolendum est

Primum ipsi tibi, tunc tua me infortunia lædent,

Telephe, vel Peleu. MALE SI MANDATA LOQUERIS,

Aut dormitabo aut ridebo.

And it may be worth observing, that Horace gives this precept particularly to show, that bombast and unnatural sentiments are incapable of moving the tender passions, which he is directing the poet how to raise. For, in the lines just before, he gives this rule:

Telephus & Peleus, cum pauper & exul uterque,

Projicit ampullas, & sesquipedalia verba.

Not that I would deny, that very bad lines in bad tragedies have had this effect. But then it always proceeds from one or other of these causes.

1. Either when the subject is domestic, and the scene lies at home; the spectators, in this case, become interested in the fortunes of the distressed; and their thoughts are so much taken up with the subject, that they are not at liberty to attend to the poet; who otherwise, by his faulty sentiments and diction, would have stifled the emotions springing up from a sense of the distress. But this is nothing to the case in hand. For, as Hamlet says:

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?

2. When bad lines raise this affection, they are bad in the other extreme; low, abject, and groveling, instead of being highly figurative and swelling; yet, when attended with a natural simplicity, they have force enough to strike illiterate and simple minds. The tragedies of Banks will justify both these observations.

But if any one will still say, that Shakspeare intended to represent a player unnaturally and fantasticaly affected, we must appeal to Hamlet, that is, to Shakspeare himself in this matter; who, on the reflection he makes upon the player's emotion, in order to excite his own revenge, gives not the least hint that the player was unnaturally or injudiciously moved. On the contrary, his fine description of the actor's emotion shows, he thought just otherwise:

————— *this player here,*
But in a fiction; in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
That from her working all his visage wan'd:
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
A broken voice, &c.

And indeed had Hamlet esteemed this emotion any thing unnatural, it had been a very improper circumstance to spur him to his purpose.

As Shakspeare has here shown the effects which a fine description of nature, heightened with all the ornaments of art, had upon an intelligent player, whose business habituates him to enter intimately and deeply into the characters of men and manners, and to give nature its free workings on all occasions; so he has artfully shown what effects the very same scene would have upon a quite different man, Polonius; *by nature*, very weak and very artificial [two qualities, though commonly enough joined in life, yet generally so much disguised as not to be seen by common eyes to be together: and which an ordinary poet durst not have brought so near one another]; *by discipline*, practised in a species of wit and eloquence, which was stiff, forced, and pedantic; and *by trade* a politician, and therefore, of consequence, without any of the affecting notices of humanity. Such is the man whom Shakspeare has judiciously chosen to represent the false taste of that audience which had condemned the play here reciting. When the actor comes to the finest and most pathetic part of the speech, Polonius cries out *This is too long*; on which Hamlet, in contempt of his ill judgement, replies, *It shall to the barber's with thy beard*; [intimating that, by this judgement, it appeared that all his wisdom lay in his length of beard]. *Pr'ythee, say on. He's for a jig or a tale of bawdry* [the common entertainment of that time, as well as this, of the people] *or he sleeps; say on.* And yet this man of modern taste, who stood all this time perfectly unmoved with the forcible imagery of the relator, no sooner hears, amongst many good things, one quaint and fantastical word, put in, I suppose, purposely for this end, than he professes his approbation of the propriety and dignity of it. *That's good. Nobled queen is good.* On the whole then, I think, it plainly appears,

that the long quotation is not given to be ridiculed and laughed at, but to be admired. The character given of the play, by Hamlet, cannot be ironical. The passage itself is extremely beautiful. It has the effect that all pathetick relations, naturally written, should have; and it is condemned, or regarded with indifference, by one of a wrong, unnatural taste. From hence (to observe it by the way) the actors, in their representation of this play, may learn how this speech ought to be spoken, and what appearance Hamlet ought to assume during the recital.

That which supports the common opinion, concerning this passage, is the turgid expression in some parts of it; which, they think, could never be given by the poet to be commended. We shall therefore, in the next place, examine the lines most obnoxious to censure, and see how much, allowing the charge, this will make for the induction of their conclusion:

*Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide,
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
The unnerved father falls.*

And again,

*Out, out, thou strumpet fortune! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power:
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends.*

Now whether these be bombast or not, is not the question; but whether Shakspeare esteemed them so. That he did not so esteem them appears from his having used the very same thoughts in the same expressions, in his best plays, and given them to his principal characters, where he aims at the sublime. As in the following passages:

Troilus, in *Troilus and Cressida*, far outstrains the execution of Pyrrhus's sword in the character he gives of Hector's:

*"When many times the captive Grecians fall
Even in the fan and wind of your fair sword,
You bid them rise and live."*

Cleopatra, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, rails at fortune in the same manner:

*"No, let me speak, and let me rail so high,
That the false huswife Fortune break her wheel,
Provok'd at my offence."*

But another use may be made of these quotations; a discovery of this recited play: which, letting us into a circumstance of our author's life (as a writer) hitherto unknown, was the reason I have been so large upon this question. I think then it appears, from what has been said, that the play in dispute was Shakspeare's own; and that this was the occasion of writing it. He was desirous, as

soon as he had found his strength, of restoring the chasteness and regularity of the ancient stage: and therefore composed this tragedy on the model of the Greek drama, as may be seen by throwing so much *action* into *relation*. But his attempt proved fruitless; and the raw, unnatural taste, then prevalent, forced him back again into his old Gothic manner. For which he took this revenge upon his audience. **WARBURTON.**

I formerly thought that the lines which have given rise to the foregoing observations, were extracted from some old play, of which it appeared to me probable that Christopher Marlowe was the author; but whatever Shakspeare's view in producing them may have been, I am now decidedly of opinion they were written by himself, not in any former unsuccessful piece, but expressly for the play of *Hamlet*. It is observable that what Dr. Warburton calls "the fine similitude of the storm," is likewise found in our poet's *Venus and Adonis*. **MALONE.**

The praise which Hamlet bestows on this piece is certainly dissembled, and agrees very well with the character of madness, which, before witnesses, he thought it necessary to support. The speeches before us have so little merit, that nothing but an affectation of singularity, could have influenced Dr. Warburton to undertake their defence. The poet, perhaps, meant to exhibit a just resemblance of some of the plays of his own age, in which the faults were too general and too glaring to permit a few splendid passages to atone for them. The player knew his trade, and spoke the lines in an affecting manner, because Hamlet had declared them to be pathetick, or might be in reality a little moved by them; for, "There are less degrees of nature (says Dryden) by which some faint emotions of pity and terror are raised in us, as a less engine will raise a less proportion of weight, though not so much as one of Archimedes' making." The mind of the prince, it must be confessed, was fitted for the reception of gloomy ideas, and his tears were ready at a slight solicitation. It is by no means proved, that Shakspeare has employed the same thoughts clothed in the same expressions, in his best plays. If he bids the false huswife fortune break her wheel, he does not desire her to break all its spokes; nay, even its periphery, and make use of the nave afterwards for such an immeasurable cast. Though if what Dr. Warburton has said should be found in any instance to be exactly true, what can we infer from thence, but that Shakspeare was sometimes wrong in spite of conviction, and in the hurry of writing committed those very faults which his judgement could detect in others? Dr. Warburton is inconsistent in his assertions concerning the literature of Shakspeare. In a note on *Troilus and Cressida*, he affirms, that his want of learning kept him from being acquainted with the writings of Homer; and, in this instance, would suppose him capable of producing a complete tragedy written

on the ancient rules; and that the speech before us had sufficient merit to entitle it to a place in the second book of Virgil's *Æneid*, even though the work had been carried to that perfection which the Roman poet had conceived.*

Had Shakspeare made one unsuccessful attempt in the manner of the ancients (that he had any knowledge of their rules, remains to be proved,) it would certainly have been recorded by contemporary writers, among whom Ben Jonson would have been the first. Had his darling ancients been unskilfully imitated by a rival poet, he would at least have preserved the memory of the fact, to show how unsafe it was for any one, who was not as thorough a scholar as himself, to have meddled with their sacred remains.

"Within that circle none durst walk but he." He has represented Inigo Jones as being ignorant of the very names of those classical authors, whose architecture he undertook to correct; in his *Poetaster* he has in several places hinted at our poet's injudicious use of words, and seems to have pointed his ridicule more than once at some of his descriptions and characters. It is true that he has praised him, but it was not while that praise could have been of any service to him; and posthumous applause is always to be had on easy conditions. Happy it was for Shakspeare, that he took nature for his guide, and, engaged in the warm pursuit of her beauties, left to Jonson the repositories of learning: so has he escaped a contest which might have rendered his life uneasy, and bequeathed to our possession the more valuable copies from nature herself: for Shakspeare was (says Dr. Hurd, in his notes on Horace's Art of Poetry) "the first that broke through the bondage of classical superstition. And he owed this felicity, as he did some others, to his want of what is called the advantage of a learned education. Thus uninfluenced by the weight of early prepossession, he struck at once into the road of nature and common sense: and without designing, without knowing it, hath left us in his historical plays, with all their anomalies, an exacter resemblance of the Athenian stage than is any where to be found in its most professed admirers and copyists." Again, *ibid*: "It is possible, there are, who think a want of reading, as well as vast superiority of genius, hath con-

* It appears to me not only that Shakspeare had the favourable opinion of these lines which he makes Hamlet express, but that they were extracted from some play which he, at a more early period, had either produced or projected upon the story of *Dido and Æneas*. The verses recited are far superior to those of any coeval writer: the parallel passage in Marlowe and Nashe's *Dido* will not bear the comparison. Possibly, indeed, it might have been his first attempt, before the divinity that lodg'd within him had instructed him to despise the tumid and unnatural style so much and so unjustly admired in his predecessors or contemporaries, and which he afterward so happily ridiculed in "the swaggering vaine of Ancient Pistol."

RITSON.

tributed to lift this astonishing man, to the glory of being esteemed the most original THINKER and SPEAKER, since the times of Homer."

To this extract I may add the sentiments of Dr. Edward Young on the same occasion. "Who knows whether Shakspeare might not have thought less, if he had read more? Who knows if he might not have laboured under the load of Jonson's learning, as Enceladus under Ætna? His mighty genius, indeed, through the most mountainous oppression would have breathed out some of his inextinguishable fire; yet possibly, he might not have risen up into that giant, that much more than common man, at which we now gaze with amazement and delight. Perhaps he was as learned as his dramattick province required; for whatever other learning he wanted, he was master of two books, which the last conflagration alone can destroy; the book of nature, and that of man. These he had by heart, and has transcribed many admirable pages of them into his immortal works. These are the fountain-head, whence the Castalian streams of *original* composition flow; and these are often mudded by other waters, though waters in their distinct channel, most wholesome and pure; as two chemical liquors, separately clear as crystal, grow foul by mixture, and offend the sight. So that he had not only as much learning as his dramattick province required, but, perhaps as it could safely bear. If Milton had spared some of his learning, his muse would have gained more glory than he would have lost by it."

Conjectures on Original Composition.

The first remark of Voltaire on this tragedy, is that the former king had been poisoned by his brother and *his queen*. The guilt of the latter, however, is far from being ascertained. The Ghost forbears to accuse her as an accessory, and very forcibly recommends her to the mercy of her son. I may add, that her conscience appears undisturbed during the exhibition of the mock tragedy, which produces so visible a disorder in her husband who was really criminal. The last observation of the same author has no greater degree of veracity to boast of; for now, says he, all the actors in the piece are swept away, and one Monsieur Fortenbras is introduced to conclude it. Can this be true, when Horatio, Osrick, Voltimand, and Cornelius survive? These, together with the whole court of Denmark, are supposed to be present at the catastrophe, so that we are not indebted to the Norwegian chief for having kept the stage from vacancy.

Monsieur de Voltaire has since transmitted, in an epistle to the Academy of Belles Lettres, some remarks on the late French translation of Shakspeare; but, alas! no traces of genius or vigour are discoverable in this *crambe repetita*, which is notorious only for its insipidity, fallacy, and malice. It serves indeed to show an appa-

rent decline of talents and spirit in its writer, who no longer relies on his own ability to depreciate a rival, but appeals in a plaintive strain to the queen and princesses of France for their assistance to stop the further circulation of Shakspeare's renown.

Impartiality, nevertheless, must acknowledge that his private correspondence displays a superior degree of animation. Perhaps an ague shook him when he appealed to the publick on this subject; but the effects of a fever seem to predominate in his subsequent letter to Monsieur D'Argenteuil on the same occasion; for such a letter it is as our John Dennis (while his frenzy lasted) might be supposed to have written. "C'est moi qui autrefois parlai le premier de ce Shakspeare: c'est moi qui le premier montrai aux François quelques perles que j'avois trouvé dans son énorme fumier." Mrs. Montague, the justly celebrated authoress of the *Essay on the genius and writings* of our author, was in Paris, and in the circle where these ravings of the Frenchman were first publicly recited. On hearing the illiberal expression already quoted, with no less elegance than readiness she replied—"C'est un fumier qui a fertilisé une terre bien ingrate."—In short, the author of *Zayre*, *Mahomet*, and *Semiramis*, possesses all the mischievous qualities of a midnight felon, who, in the hope to conceal his guilt, sets the house he has robbed on fire.

As for Messieurs D'Alembert and Marmontel, they might safely be passed over with that neglect which their impotence of criticism deserves. Voltaire, in spite of his natural disposition to vilify an English poet, by adopting sentiments, characters, and situations from Shakspeare, has bestowed on him involuntary praise. Happily, he has not been disgraced by the worthless encomiums or disfigured by the awkward imitations of the other pair, who "follow in the chace not like hounds that hunt, but like those who fill up the cry." When D'Alembert declares that more sterling sense is to be met with in ten French verses than in thirty English ones, contempt is all that he provokes,—such contempt as can only be exceeded by that which every scholar will express, who may chance to look into the prose translation of Lucan by Marmontel, with the vain expectation of discovering either the sense, the spirit or the whole of the original. STEEVENS.

THE END OF THE TWENTY-SECOND VOLUME.



Shakespeare, William, / Johnson, Samuel / Steevens, George,

The Plays of William Shakespeare with the corrections and illustrations of
various commentators, to which are added notes

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